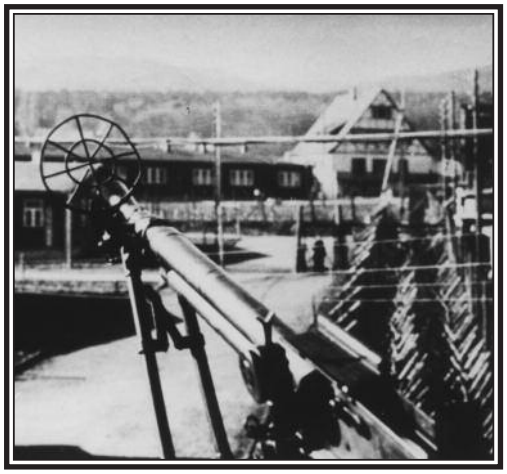
AFTER THE BATTLE



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Editor: Karel Margry

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Telephone: 0181-534 8833

Fax: 0181-555 7567

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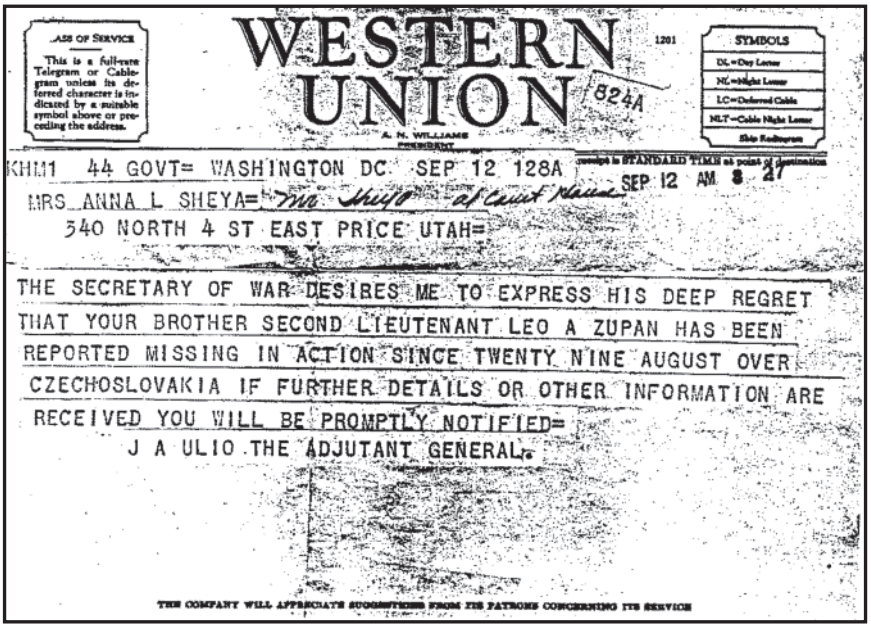
Front cover: Dulag Luft, then and now. The former Kommandant's house still stands at Oberursel but other remaining buildings of the infamous wartime interrogation centre — which after the war became US Camp King — are about to be demolished.

Centre Pages: Recovery of Hudson FK790, 53 years after it crashed into the IJsselmeer waters with four Dutch secret agents aboard. *Top left*: Cleaning one of the aircraft's machine guns. *Bottom left*: Annie Meijer-Bockma visits the spot where her brother, agent Jan Bockma, perished in 1944. (KM) *Top and bottom right*: Burial of pilot John Menzies, whose remains were found in the wreck. (J. Werkhoven)

Back Cover: The Hudson's propeller, now a memorial at Exmorra. (R. Body)

Acknowledgements: The Editor extends his appreciation to Klaus Witzel and Nikolaus Fleck of the SEWO GmbH Oberursel for permission to photograph the site of Dulag Luft. For help with the SOE Hudson story, the Editor would like to thank: Luitenant ter Zee Bert de Leeuw, Public Relations Officer of the Dutch Royal Navy; Kapitein H. A. Spierings and Adjutant Henry Tennison, Salvage Officers, and Majoor Robert de Jong, Public Relations Officer, of the RNAF; Wijnand Baerken and Piet Appelman of the OVMO, Tjeerd Gietema; Klaas Groeneveld, Cok van Hout; Jan Werkhoven; Duncan Stuart, the SOE Adviser at the Foreign Office; and Robert Body. The Editor is indebted to Pedro Festel, a resident of Palawan, for the present-day photographs of the USS *Darter* and to Richard Folsom for technical support and for arranging the interview with Commander McClintock.

Photo Credits: IWM — Imperial War Museum, London; KM — Koninklijke Marine.



WESTERN UNION

1201

SYMBOLS
DL = Day Letter
NL = Night Letter
LC = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter

824A

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

CASE OF SERVICE
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

KHM1 44 GOVT= WASHINGTON DC SEP 12 128A

Time is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

SEP 12 AM 8 27

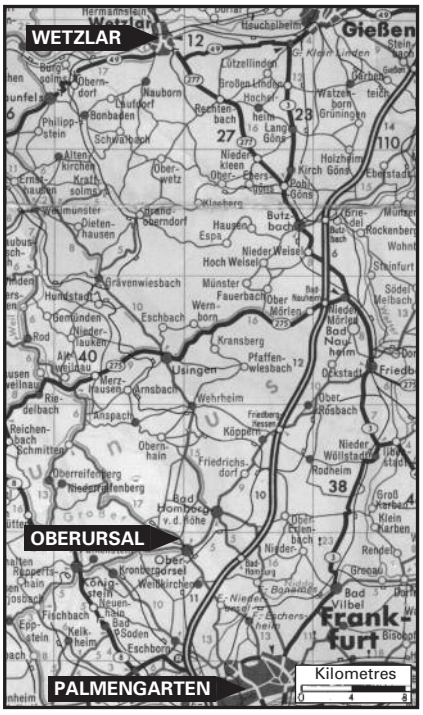
MRS ANNA L SHEYA= Mrs Sheya of Coeur Mines
540 NORTH 4 ST EAST PRICE UTAH=

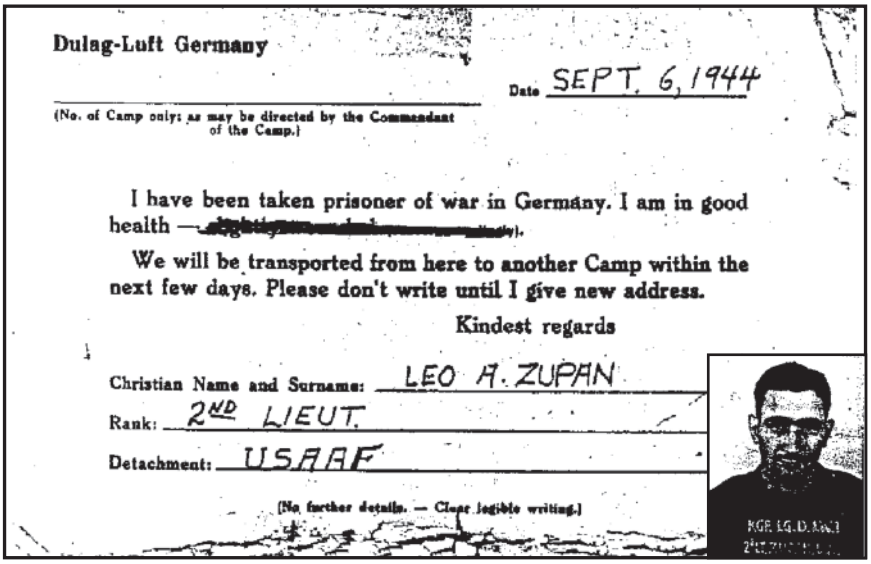
THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR BROTHER SECOND LIEUTENANT LEO A ZUPAN HAS BEEN REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION SINCE TWENTY NINE AUGUST OVER CZECHOSLOVAKIA IF FURTHER DETAILS OR OTHER INFORMATION ARE RECEIVED YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED=

J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

During the Second World War, the interrogation of prisoners of war was a vital part of the intelligence process and none more important than aircrews. In Britain, German aviators were processed through the Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (CSDIC), initially located in the Tower of London; then at Trent Park, Cockfosters, until July 1942 when CSDIC moved to purpose-built accommodation in Wilton Park and Latimer Park in Buckinghamshire (see *After the Battle* No. 70). Germany had its own interrogation centre — known to aircrews as Dulag Luft — at Oberursel just north-west of Frankfurt-am-Main. Its full name was Durchgangslager der Luftwaffe or Luftwaffe Transit Camp and as such all captured Allied airmen passed through its gates. For example, 2nd Lieutenant Leo A. Zupan was the co-pilot on a B-17G (42-107118) *Snafu Per Man* of the 2nd Bomb Group, Fifteenth Air Force, shot down near Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, on August 29, 1944. Of the ten-man crew, eight baled out and were made prisoner but not until October did his sister Anna Sheya finally receive word from Leo in Dulag Luft via the Red Cross that he was alive but prisoner of war. (Reproduced by kind permission of Manuel van Eyck from his unpublished manuscript *The Silent Heroes*.)





Dulag-Luft Germany

Date SEPT. 6, 1944

(No. of Camp only; as may be directed by the Commandant of the Camp.)

I have been taken prisoner of war in Germany. I am in good health — [redacted].

We will be transported from here to another Camp within the next few days. Please don't write until I give new address.

Kindest regards

Christian Name and Surname: LEO A. ZUPAN

Rank: 2ND LIEUT.

Detachment: USAAF

[No further details. — Clear legible writing.]

DULAG LUFT

By Charles Rollings

On the outskirts of Oberursel, 13 kilometers north-west of Frankfurt-am-Main, stand the remains of what was once Nazi Germany's most important centre for the interrogation of RAF and USAAF prisoners of war. It is difficult to locate the site as you go past by car, because it is tucked away behind a post-war American housing estate, but as you peer between the blocks of flats and the unpruned trees and shrubs, you can make out, 300 yards away, a newly developing housing estate and, beyond it, a series of older, typically German timber-framed houses and buildings.

This was the location of the transit and interrogation camp which Allied aircrew POWs knew as 'Dulag Luft' — short for Durchgangslager der Luftwaffe or 'Transit Camp of the Luftwaffe'. Although the camp underwent a number of changes in nomenclature during the war, eventually rendering the name Dulag Luft obsolete and innacurate, it was this name which stuck, for it was convenient, easy to remember and, above all, described an experience which few prisoners would forget.

Top: **The Dulag Luft transit camp pictured in 1940-41. In the foreground is the chicken farm and the small road leading past the main entrance to the compound. Beyond the camp is the recreation field, and in the distance Hohemarkstrasse and the Oberursel Kunstwollfabrik (synthetic wool factory). This photo was taken from the first floor of the Reichslehrsiedlung community house.**

Above: **The view in April 1999 looking south from the steps of the same building. The whole area is now overgrown and, even as we write, the camp is in the throes of being demolished. The buildings dead-centre stand on the site of the prisoner of war compound (see plan on page 12). The path in the middle foreground leads left to the old guardhouse and right to the junction with Siedlungsstrasse.**

Dulag Luft lay some 13 kilometres north-west of Frankfurt. Most prisoners arrived at the railway station [1] from where ordinary street trams took them to the camp via the Arndtstrasse (now Berliner Strasse) [2], and along the Hohemarkstrasse [3] to the Kupferhammer tram stop [4]. Dulag Luft [5] lay between Eichwäldchenweg [6] and Siedlungsstrasse [7]. A hospital, Hohemark clinic [8], lay to the west. The Oberursel Wool Works is [9]. By 1943, with an average of 1,000 prisoners passing through the interrogation centre each month, Dulag Luft was severely overcrowded so a new tented transit camp was set up in the Palmengarten — a park in Frankfurt — to which prisoners were moved after initial questioning. However, locating a POW camp in the centre of a strategic target was against the Geneva Convention, and after it was bombed in March 1944 a new compound was established 40 kilometres to the north near Wetzlar (see map on page 2).

Dulag Luft was a camp which filled Allied aircrew prisoners of war with dread. In escape and evasion lectures, aircrew were warned that should they ever be shot down, captured and sent there, they were to be on their guard. All Air Force prisoners were 'valuable' to the Germans, and had to be milked for every scrap of information before being sent to a regular prisoner of war camp. Rumours of what they could expect at Dulag Luft ranged from kid-glove treatment — drinks at the local inn, lavish dinner parties, prostitutes, ski-ing trips in the Taunus Mountains — to brutal beatings and unendurable torture. The truth was less dramatic, but just as sinister. Although no complete history of this camp has ever been published, countless ex-POWs have devoted chapters to it in their memoirs, and references to stool-pigeons, collaborators and a disturbing atmosphere abound. Almost 30 years passed before RAF ex-POWs received any inkling as to the camp's true purpose and its significance to the Nazi war effort. But given Dulag Luft's origins, history and location, it is easy to see why they felt paranoid.

At first sight, the area surrounding the camp was pleasant and apparently innocuous. It stood on the western outskirts of Oberursel, a suburb of Frankfurt-am-Main with about 20,000 inhabitants, on agricultural land which sloped upwards to the Taunus foothills in the north. To the south lay Hohemarkstrasse — the main road in to Oberursel — and the Oberursel Kunstwollfabrik, whose employees used the nearby Kupferhammer tram-stop. Running along the eastern boundary was Eichwäldchenweg, a narrow country lane leading northwards from Hohemarkstrasse to the village of Eichwäldchen and the Oberstedter Forest. Between the forest and Hohemarkstrasse lay 13,000 square metres of sparsely wooded grassland, along the northern and western edges of which sprawled three Siedlungslehrhöfe (settlement teaching farms) — each comprising an experimental farm and a model housing estate — and a Landwirtschaftliche Hochschule (agricultural school). Cutting through the grassland, from east to west, was a narrow, winding stream.

The Siedlungshöfe (settlements) were founded on September 3, 1938, at Frankfurt-am-Main's first Building and Settlement Exhibition. The official collective title for all three, in the early planning stages, had been Gausiedlungshof Oberursel (Oberursel District Settlement), but the Exhibition upgraded it to a Reichssiedlungshof (Reich Settlement). The land already contained the Insitute of Disease and Epidemic Control and the Institute of Bee-Keeping, and the new plans called for these to be incorporated into three experimental farms with the task of improving animal breeding and crop-growing and educating specialists who worked for the Rhine-Main Settlement Authority. These specialists included amongst others architects, builders, farmers, estates managers, administrators and even politicians and mayors.

The Siedlungshöfe were to play an important role in the 'spiritual education' of people under National Socialism. Consequently, their design would demonstrate 'conclusively the way in which the National Socialist ideology influences today's ideals of construction down to its smallest ramifications, to the point of being, indeed, the sole basis of our contemporary architectures'.

Not surprisingly, the Siedlungshöfe were later referred to as a 'megalomaniac's project'. The dwellings, strung out along a Siedlungsstrasse (settlement road) parallel to Eichwäldchenweg, were of the mock-Bavarian type popular in the Nazi film industry's rustic romantic comedies.

The model houses on the western side of the Siedlungsstrasse, which all new prisoners passed as they trekked uphill towards the camp. Used by the US Army and Air Force after the war, they were given barrack numbers, as were all the buildings on the site of former Dulag Luft that in American hands became Camp King.

Further up the slope and dominating the settlements was the agricultural school. Of similar design, it was four storeys high (including an attic and a semi-basement), with a disproportionately narrow spire topped by a weather-vane. This building was often mistaken by prisoners of war for a church. Although it was never part of Dulag Luft, most photographs of the camp were taken from the first floor of this building. The whole estate, despite being described as 'very picturesque', could almost have been designed by Hitler's architect, Albert Speer, but was in fact the work of Regierungsbaumeister Hufnagel, an obscure government architect.

Shortly after war broke out, the location became an object of interest to the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (High Command of the Armed Forces), who considered its proximity to France and Luxembourg of strategic importance. The southernmost cluster of farm buildings and the open land between them and Hohemarkstrasse were appropriated by the OKW as a potential interrogation centre for French army prisoners.

The Gemeinschaftshaus (community house) of the Reichslehrsiedlung (named the 'Zeppelinheim' in the Nazi era, and 'the Mountain Lodge' by the Americans) on top of the slope to the north of Dulag Luft. Although this building had nothing to do with the Dulag set-up, it was from here that most views of the camp were taken.

Left: **At first, the existing buildings on the site were simply converted for use in the newly-established Offiziersdurchgangslager. Seen from the POW compound and from across Siedlungsstrasse, the house in the centre became the Kommandant's office, the one on the far left being used as the Kommandantur where prisoners' records were stored. On the right stands the farmhouse which was converted into a cell block.** *Right:* **The same road along which prisoners would have marched photographed nearly 60 years later. Fortunately these buildings of the pre-war Third Reich era are to be preserved.**

Initially the camp — designated Offiziersdurchgangslager (Officers' Transit Camp) — consisted of little more than one farmhouse, the ground floor of which comprised a central corridor giving onto fourteen rooms which lent themselves to conversion into solitary confinement cells. Twelve of these became cells, and the others a common room and a wash-room. Each cell was about ten feet long and seven feet wide with plain pine walls and a radiator. Each was furnished with a varnished pine table, a wooden chair, a white pine bedside cabinet and an iron bedstead. The casement windows in each cell opened outwards, and to prevent prisoners leaning out iron bars were set into the inside window-sill and lintel. Surrounding the building was a high barbed-wire fence, with a gate to the south. Almost opposite the gate stood a small cottage. This was the home of one of the settlement managers, Herr Avieni, who was also peace-time director of a local steel-works. A major in the Army Reserve, he became the camp's first Kommandant, and his cottage was used throughout the war by successive commandants as office and mess. Behind and to the north-east of Avieni's cottage were two more cottages which were used as the Kommandantur or administrative quarters.

During the Phoney War, the only Vernehmungsoffizier (Interrogation Officer) was a reservist in his early sixties called Bayer, who had been a businessman in Mainz, and now held the Luftwaffe rank of Leutnant.

The farmhouse used to accommodate prisoners from October 1939 to April 1940. It then became used as a solitary confinement block until Oberstleutnant Erich Killinger, Dulag's fourth and last Kommandant, had a new 'cooler' built in 1942. From then on it housed the Photographic Room, W/T Room and Medical Inspection Room. Throughout the war it was surrounded by barbed wire, with a gate in the southern boundary.

International Red Cross Committee
Geneva, Switzerland

ARRIVAL REPORT FORM

Date:
Name: Surname: Service Number:
Rank:
Trade:
R.A.F., R.C.A.F., R.A.A.F., R.N.Z.A.F., S.A.A.F., U.S.A.A.F., U.S.N.A.F., F.A.A.
Date of birth:
Where born:
Profession:
Religion:
Married:
How many children:
Home address:
Next of kin:
What was your payment during the war:
When shot down:
Where shot down:
By:
Where taken prisoner:
By:
Squadron: Group: Command:
Station: Station No:
Letters and number of aircraft:
Type of aircraft:
How is your health: Wounded:

Members of the crew

Name: Surname: Number: Wounded: Killed: P.O.W:

Date Signature

Left: **Wing Commander Harry Day, shot down in October 1939, pictured at Dulag Luft by a photographer from *Der Adler*. He became the Senior British Officer (SBO) from November 1939 to June 1941.** *Right:* **Specimen of the Red Cross form — the so-called Arrival Report Form. The pattern varied throughout the war, some forms omitting the red cross, and others the IRRC heading. These changes were usually as a result of complaints from the Protecting Power. But, one way or another, the form remained in constant use throughout the war, and the German staff's preoccupation with it bordered on obsession, with some forms asking as many as 50 questions, although only name, rank and number were required under the Geneva Convention.**

For the first two months of the war the only prisoners to pass through were officers of the French Armée de l'Air and the Royal Air Force, shot down on daylight reconnaissance missions over the Ruhr. They were locked in day and night, with only an hour's fresh-air exercise a day. Three sentries at a time were on duty in the corridor. Bayer and the guards were billeted in Gasthäuser in Oberursel, Eichwäldchen and along the road half-way to Hohemark, a mile to the west.

The first RAF prisoner to arrive at the camp was Wing Commander Harry Day, the CO of No. 57 (Blenheim) Squadron, part of the Air Component of the British Expeditionary Force in France. His Blenheim had been set ablaze by Me 109s on October 13 and his crew killed. Day himself had suffered minor burns to his hands and face and was swathed in bandages.

On the first day, when he asked for something to read, Day was handed a pencil and a wad of notepaper by Bayer, who suggested he might wish to write home. Each night, Bayer returned to collect the result of Day's scribblings, promising they would be censored and then sent to England. But nothing ever reached home.

On the third day, Bayer asked him to fill in an Arrival Report Form bearing the heading of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva. It was a lengthy questionnaire, in duplicate, one copy of which, said Bayer, would be retained by personnel at the camp, while the other would be sent to Geneva for onward transmission to the War Office in Britain. The form asked for the prisoner's name, rank and service number, and then went on to ask his squadron number and base, the type of aircraft he was flying, the nature of the operation on which he was shot down, how he was shot down, how many crew manned the aircraft, his peacetime occupation, where he had been trained, his rate of pay, his home address, the name and address of his next of kin — questions of no possible interest or value to the Red Cross. The form was obviously fake. Day gave his name, rank and service number and handed back the form. Shortly afterwards, he and the French prisoners were transferred to Oflag IXA/H, a fortress at Spangenberg run by the Army.

The Germans already had much information about RAF bases and units, which had been provided by spies and their pre-war air attaché in London, General Wenniger, and culled from monitoring press reports and Empire Air Days. This had been supplemented by comprehensive photo-reconnaissance carried out by a unit of Heinkel IIIs which, operating from Staaken airield in Berlin, bore civil aircraft markings while undertaking so-called 'civil route-proving' flights. With the outbreak of hostilities, all German spies in England had been interned and most other sources of information had dried up, although newspapers and periodicals still came in from neutral countries (it was estimated that German Intelligence could receive any British publication via Portugal within three days), and translators in the Interceptor Service monitored and transcribed BBC radio broadcasts.

By November 1939, it had become clear to the OKW that the most up-to-date source of information on the morale of the British public, as well as the extent of the country's war-readiness, would be POWs — and that the only prisoners likely to be taken in the foreseeable future would be aircrew. Newly captured airmen therefore became Germany's chief source of information on the relative strengths and weaknesses of RAF units. Although not privy to secrets about grand strategy, they could also unwittingly reveal tactical and operational information which would allow Flak gunners to place their weapons, and assist experts in evaluating the latest technical equipment and determining important targets.

Because most aircrew were still only operating over western Germany, the camp at Oberursel was taken over by the Luftwaffe and re-named Dulag Luft. A new commandant was appointed, Oberstleutnant Peterpaul von Donat, whose principal qualification was his fluency in French. It was clear, however, that interrogation of captured aircrew had so far been ineptly handled and that little of intelligence value had been gleaned. Souvenir hunters had also stripped crashed aircraft of important parts, along with food, and had taken parachutes, socks and white pullovers off dead aircrew. Accordingly, the Luftwaffe implemented an OKW directive that the nearest Luftwaffe base was to be notified whenever an RAF aircraft crashed and its crew were captured. Looting of the wreckage by soldiers and civilians alike carried the death penalty. The aircraft had to be placed under guard until the base arranged for competent Luftwaffe engineers to examine it. Under Luftwaffe regulation D (Luft) 2706/07, personnel from this station were also to transfer the aircrew immediately to Dulag Luft without them first being interrogated locally. The job of interrogating them was therefore given over entirely to von Donat and his organisation. Paratroopers would also be sent there, as in Germany airborne forces were part of the Luftwaffe, and so would naval aircrew.

Von Donat was soon succeeded by Major Theo Rumpel whose background and qualifications made him at first sight an excellent choice. Beginning his military career in 1914 as a regular cavalry officer, he had transferred to the Luftstreitkräfte (the German Imperial Air Service) during the Great War, eventually joining Hermann Göring's squadron, equipped with the Albatross D5s. In March 1918, Rumpel's aircraft was jumped by an SE5 and his right shoulder shattered by machine-gun fire. He nevertheless brought his aircraft safely back to base, receiving much praise from Göring. After the armistice he went into semi-retirement and settled in Batavia, in the Dutch East Indies, where he met and married a Dutch woman and combined his work as an import-export merchant with sending reports of Allied developments in the Far East back to Germany. In 1936 he was asked to rejoin the Luftwaffe with the rank of captain, and was back on flying duties the following year. In 1938 he was sent for by Generalfeldmarschall Werner van Blomberg, the first supreme commander of the newly-formed OKW, and offered promotion to the rank of major in Abteilung V (Fremde Mächte) — the department of the Luftwaffenführungsstab (Fü-Stab, Air Operations Staff) dealing with foreign affairs. Abteilung V was commanded by Generalleutnant Josef 'Beppu' Schmid, a favourite of both Hitler and Göring. Rumpel — who was fluent in the English, French and Dutch languages — was to become England-Bearbeiter (England Analyst) in the bureau dealing with American, British, Dutch and Scandinavian affairs, commanded by Oberst Morell.

Rumpel had made many British friends in the Far East, and did not relish the prospect of having to trick military secrets out of them. In any case, such was the complexity of the Third Reich administration that Rumpel was put in a difficult position. Overall control of prison camps was in the hands of the OKW. Within the OKW was a department called the Allgemeines Wehrmachtsamt (AWA, Armed Forces General Office), which was responsible for personnel, training and equipment, but which also had authority over POWs; and within the AWA was the Abteilung Kriegsgefangenenwesen im OKW (literally, POW Office within the OKW), which was solely responsible for POW affairs. Furthermore, the OKW also had an Inspekteur des Kriegsgefangenenwesen (Inspector of POW Affairs), who commanded all prison camps and ensured that OKW directives concerning prisoners were carried out. Another tier of administration was the Wehrkreis, or military district. Germany was divided into 22 Wehrkreise, whose commanders were in part responsible for local camps. Dulag Luft was in Wehrkreis XII, which had its headquarters

Major Theo Rumpel, the Kommandant from November 1939 to November 1941.

in Wiesbaden. Yet another layer of administration was that of the Luftwaffe, as Air Force camps came under the control of the Oberkommando der Luftwaffe, which had divided Germany into Luftgaue, or air districts, which again had commanders responsible for local POW camps.

Because of its intelligence function, Dulag Luft had also to report to Abteilung V, as well as falling within the orbit of the Abwehr, the Intelligence and Clandestine Warfare Service of the OKW, commanded by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris. The Abwehr's Section I, Group I (Lutwaffentechnik), was responsible for collecting details on the war potential of the RAF. Canaris also had a department known as Abteilung III, Gruppe III-KGF, which concerned itself with the prevention of espionage, sabotage and escapes by POWs. However, Canaris was a favourite of nobody, and Rumpel's only champion was Göring. All three were despised by Reichsführer of the SS Heinrich Himmler, who considered the Abwehr and all other intelligence organisations interfering and dangerous rivals, and itched to get control of air force camps. In 1941, 1942, 1943 and again in 1944, Himmler tried to take command of Dulag Luft. Rumpel — and, indeed, all his subordinates — were therefore being pulled in all directions. Despite this, Dulag Luft managed for most of the war to maintain an accurate picture of the way the RAF was organised as well as up-to-date information on its strengths, formation and postings.

The set-up at Dulag Luft was also in violation of the prisoner of war Code and the Red Cross Convention which Germany had been one of 38 powers to sign in July 1929. Article 2 laid it down that POWs were to be protected by the detaining power from violence, insults and public curiosity, and must not be subjected to reprisals for military actions. More pertinent was Article 5 which stipulated that a POW under interrogation was obliged to give only his name, rank and service number, and must not be forced to give information on his armed forces or his country. Nor was he to be threatened, insulted, or exposed to unpleasantness or disadvantages should he withhold such information. If, by reason of his physical or mental condition, he was incapable of stating his identity, he was to be handed over to the medical services. Given the role of Dulag Luft, the imperatives of wartime Germany, and the baleful influence of Himmler, breaches of the Convention were bound to occur.

Initially, Rumpel lived in a local hotel until a wooden bungalow in the woods half a mile above the camp was converted into living quarters for him and his wife. When finished, their new quarters contained a comfortable sitting-room-cum-diner, with a huge tiled stove, which they furnished with shelves of books (and to which he would invite some POWs to dine). His office had direct lines to Berlin, the Luftwaffe High Command in Potsdam and the local Luftgau HQ in Wiesbaden.

Rumpel foresaw that a proportion of aircrew prisoners arriving at Dulag Luft would be suffering from exposure, wounds or injuries and would need urgent treatment. (Indeed, in 1940, about 10 to 15 per cent of new prisoners needed medical attention. This figure later rose to as much as 50 per cent.) Fortunately, a hospital run by Lutheran nuns, the Kurklinik Hohemark, was conveniently situated in a large park just off Altkönigweg, only ten minutes' drive to the west. The clinic had been a private rest home before the war and was now a convalescent home for German soldiers. In December, Rumpel took over one wing so that prisoners could be treated for superficial wounds and burns. The Hohemark was well-equipped and had a sanatorium, but lacked X-ray facilites and an operating theatre. As far as prisoners were concerned, however, it was more a casualty clearing house than a hospital proper. Its purpose was twofold: to give immediate medical attention to the seriously wounded and build up their strength ready for a long journey to the prison hospital, Lazarett IXC, at Obermassfeld; and to treat the less seriously wounded prior to their interrogation and transfer direct to Dulag Luft.

Left: **Kurklinik Hohemark, the hospital which lay a mile west of the camp, was used to treat prisoners who arrived with wounds.**

Right: **It still stands today, virtually unchanged as a well-equipped and busy clinic.**

Left: **Part of Major Rumpel's relaxed regime — all designed to wheedle as much information as possible from his charges — was to allow prisoners who gave their parole to go on recreational walks.** *Right:* **Although no location was given for this picture taken in 1940, the Editor tracked it down to the observatory on Grosser Feldberg (880 metres) high up in the Taunus mountains. It would have been quite a day's walk as it is 13 kilometres away from the camp by road.**

In mid-December, Rumpel started to form a British and French Permanent Staff, whose job it would be to acclimatise new prisoners to POW conditions and maintain internal discipline. The first members of this staff were brought in from Spangenberg, and consisted of Wing Commander Day; Flying Officer Richard Baughan; Pilot Officer Mike Casey; two Fleet Air Arm pilots, Lieutenants Richard Thurstan and Guy Griffiths; Leading Aircraftman J. Nelson, Casey's WOP/AG, who would act as orderly; two French Air Force Lieutenant-Colonels, Enselen and Gerardot; their respective pilots, Lieutenant Berenger and Capitaine Paul Aouach, and two other French lieutenants, Noel and Comte des Forges. Again, Day found himself in the converted farmhouse that he had occupied in October. He and the French colonels each had a cell to themselves, while the junior officers and LAC Nelson were accommodated two to a cell. Two guards patrolled the path to the cottage, which was lit with arc lamps.

Rumpel promised to make conditions as easy as possible for his prisoners. To wash down their first evening meal of bread and soup they were given a generous ration of Rhine wine. During daylight, they were allowed to walk about inside the building, although they were locked in their cells from 4 p.m. to 7 a.m. A week later they were joined by Flying Officer Peter Wimberley and his Wellington crew, who had been shot down on December 21 and held in the Hohemark. Wimberely would remain as a member of the British Permanent Staff, and his crew would stay as 'Potential Permanents' until moving on to Spangenberg.

On December 24, the British contingent received their first Red Cross food parcels, and they invited the French to join them for Christmas dinner. Rumpel allowed them to buy Rhine wine from their POW pay, despite the fact that the Geneva Convention forbade the consumption of alcohol by prisoners. (This was one of the few breaches of the Convention about which no prisoner felt inclined to inform the Protecting Power.) That evening, Rumpel joined them, bringing with him two bottles of schnapps. Three weeks after New Year 1940, the prisoners were allowed out of the farmhouse during daylight to roam the compound. The guard was withdrawn from inside the building and stationed outside the compound gate.

Soon afterwards, Colonel Gerardot was returned to Spangenberg, where he became the Senior French Officer before making a dramatic and successful escape which would eventually lead to his becoming Commander-in-Chief of the Free French Air Force.

Meanwhile, the prisoners remaining at Dulag Luft awaited the completion of a new compound. OKW directives called for a cell block and transit camp able to accommodate up to 100 officers and 500 NCOs and other ranks at any one time, with a reserve company of 115 men comprising the guard. But construction was delayed. Up to as late as January 1940, the OKW was still in negotiation with the Reichssiedlungshof regarding financial compensation for the appropriation of the estate. Then there was a shortage of building materials because priority was being given to constructing military barracks and installations throughout Germany and the occupied territories. The result was that the growth of Dulag Luft was piecemeal. So was the increase in personnel, beginning with the appointment of an Adjutant, Hauptmann Fiergutt, an alcoholic whom the prisoners nicknamed 'Fieryguts'. A more memorable character was the senior NCO, a Feldwebel known by the prisoners as 'Flak Joe'. On his pass nights he would stride towards Oberursel, proud and erect in his Number Ones, only to return at dawn, a dishevelled, blind-drunk wreck who could hardly drag himself up the road.

Wing Commander Day's lonely existence was otherwise enlivened by the gift of a cat from Major Rumpel. When a German propaganda team visited the camp four weeks later they took a photograph of Day and his cat, which appeared in the Luftwaffe periodical *Der Adler* with a caption labelling Day as 'ein grosser Katzenfreund'. A harmless tit-bit which at the time brought some brightness into the dull lives of the Dulagers, it was later to be used against them as evidence of collaboration.

The same would apply to parole walks. The official British view was that under no circumstances should prisoners give their word not to escape. But Day believed that the indefinite restrictions of the tiny compound justified prisoners taking parole walks for their mental health. Escorted through the surrounding forest by an officer and one armed guard, the walk parties would be allowed to stop at one of three large, terraced Biergärten and drink a beer each. It gave the prisoners a fleeting sense of freedom. Sometimes Rumpel would invite either Day or Enselen for a walk in the forest without an armed escort.

On the way back they halted for a beer at the Gästehaus Sandplacken. Just another nine kilometres to go!

Left: **Oberursel railway station has changed little since the Second World War. From here, POWs were taken to Dulag Luft either on foot, by car, or tram.** *Right:* **The tram stop still stands right opposite the station.**

It was on these walks that he attempted to pump them for information. The first of many such incidents took place at the end of March 1940. On March 22, the RAF's recently-formed Photographic Development Unit had despatched a Spitfire PR IB from Stradishall in Suffolk to photograph north-west Germany. The Spitfire, stripped of armament and equipped with an RAE F24 camera, took its photographs at 30,000 feet but was intercepted by German fighters on its return leg. The pilot was killed and the Spitfire disintegrated over Holland. The Germans were unable to examine the wreckage. This was by no means the first PR Spitfire over Germany — Me 109s had tried unsuccessfully to intercept one over Luxembourg 20 days earlier — and the Fü-Stab was baffled by these high-flying fighters. Oberst Morell asked Rumpel to investigate. Rumpel took Day for a walk, related the story and added: 'It is all very unfortunate and mysterious, isn't it?' Day agreed, although he had a pretty shrewd idea of what was occurring. The Germans were later to capture several photographic reconnaissance aircrew, some from Spitfires and others from Mosquitos, but were never able to identify them for what they were, and photo-reconnaissance remained one of the RAF's most closely-guarded secrets of the war.

As yet, nothing of Rumpel's operation was known to the authorities in Britain, and even Day knew only a fraction of what was going on. However, this changed in March when the first prisoners of 1940 arrived: Sergeant Ken Say and other survivors of a Wellington shot down by flak on a recce over the Ruhr; and Flying Officer John Boardman and his Whitley crew, also victims of flak, this time over Frankfurt. Boardman subsequently joined the British Permanent Staff, along with one of his WOP/AGs, Sergeant William Taylor, and Ken Say.

The transportation of newly-captured aircrew to Dulag Luft had already fallen into a smooth routine. They generally arrived at Frankfurt by either light aircraft, lorry or train, depending upon where they had been rounded up. From the main railway station they were taken under escort by local train to Oberursel. At Oberursel they either boarded a tram, went by car, or walked to the camp. Mostly they were taken by tram. The tram stop was directly opposite the railway station, both of which were situated south-east of Nassauer Strasse. On the other side of the street was a car showroom, repair shop and petrol station where they could obtain drinking water from a fountain. (This petrol station was memorable for its Coca Cola signs and a local harridan who would try to drive prisoners away from the fountain with her walking stick.) The journey by tram was short. After leaving the station, the tram crossed Nassauer Strasse and ran along Arndtstrasse (today Berliner Strasse), making its second stop at Portstrasse, at the junction where Hohemarkstrasse began. The tram then ran straight along Hohemarkstrasse, stopping again at Kupferhammer where the prisoners alighted.

Usually they arrived at night, and did not see much of their surroundings. But after crossing Hohemarkstrasse they turned into the Siedlungsstrasse, passing a pair of steep-roofed houses on the left-hand side, then fields on either side, before climbing the slight gradient which brought them to the camp. To the left were a Kommandantur building and Rumpel's office, and to the right, going off at 45 degrees, another narrow street leading to Eichwäldchenweg. Just beyond Rumpel's office was the farmhouse cell-block in its barbed-wire enclosure. Most prisoners were rather taken by the farm buildings with their window shutters painted with red and white diagonal stripes. Once in the cells, they would be ordered to remove their flying clothes and made to wear odd, ill-fitting Polish items of uniform while theirs were being searched.

Above: **'Kupferhammer — all change for Dulag Luft.' From here prisoners would cross the road (Hohemarkstrasse) to walk to the camp. Note that these POWs are in fact *leaving* Dulag Luft and about to board the tram for Frankfurt. (Bundesarchiv)**

What stories these men could tell if only we knew their names. . . their ranks. . . or their numbers! (Bundesarchiv)

Looking west down the road to the hospital. The entrance to Dulag Luft lies opposite the buildings in the background.

By now Rumpel had introduced a formula for interrogation that Dulag Luft's Vernehmungsoffiziere would perfect over the next five years. Initial contact with each new prisoner was made by Bayer, who introduced himself as a 'Receptionist' and asked the newcomer to complete the bogus Red Cross form. His attempts were usually feeble, amounting to no more than whining, pleading and cajoling. 'But my dear lad, surely you do not want your mother to worry about you and believe you have been killed? A report to that effect might reach England if you do not fill in this form accurately. Be sensible.' Bayer was usually met with an angry rebuff along the lines of: 'F-off, you dirty swine!'

On returning to his office, Bayer wrote an assessment of the prisoner's character on the back of the form: 'is addicted to cigarettes', 'is susceptible to flattery', 'talks a lot', 'is worried about his family back home' — and so on. He then passed the form to either Rumpel, Fiergutt or Heinrich Eberhardt.

A 30-year-old bespectacled blond, Eberhardt had been a secondary school teacher before being compelled to join the Nazi Party in May 1933. After studying British history at the University of London he became a university lecturer at Giessen. In December 1939 he joined Dulag Luft as a civilian, originally to censor mail and supervise the distribution of Red Cross parcels — but there were so few parcels and letters that he was asked instead to interrogate prisoners.

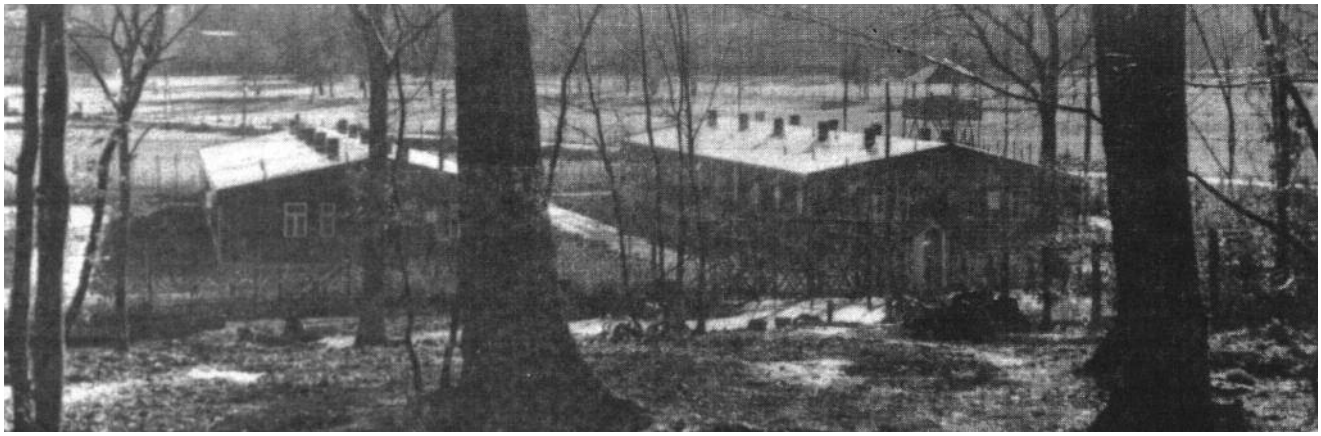
The interrogation proper usually took place in Rumpel's office. Rumpel and Eberhardt were masters at conversing 'as one airman to another', and engaged the prisoner in small talk about family life, personal interests, sport and weaponry, hoping that he would feel relaxed and open up. If small talk failed, they turned to politics, which normally undermined the confidence of RAF prisoners because their politics were generally conventional and poorly thought-out. Periodically, the prisoner would be asked to complete another question on the Red Cross form. There might be three or four interrogation sessions before Rumpel and Eberhardt were satisfied with the replies or decided the prisoner was unproductive and gave up. But these sessions were nothing if not wearing on the prisoner, who was hungry for food, company and conversation and probably still in a state of shock from being shot down.

Once the interrogation was over, the new arrivals mixed with the older prisoners and were debriefed by Day. He passed the information on Rumpel's interrogation methods to the American air attaché when he arrived with a delegation from the Protecting Power a few weeks later.

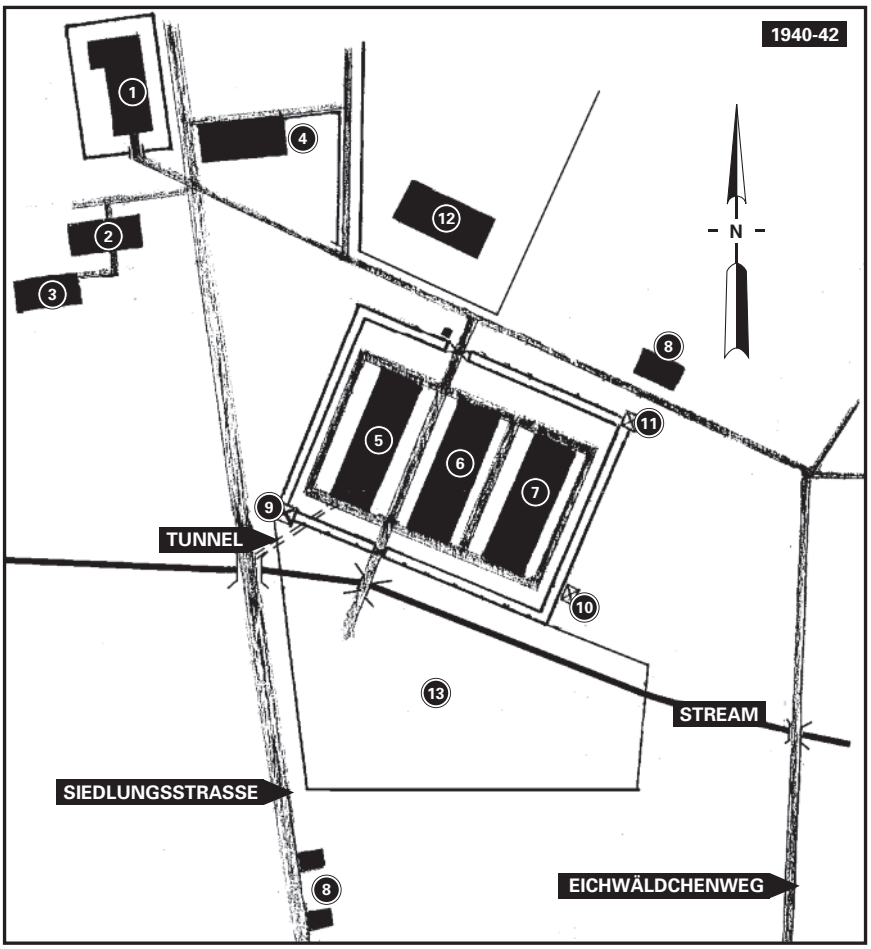
By the end of March, another significant step had been taken towards giving aircrew POWs a special status. Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy, used his high position within the Nazi hierarchy to urge Party leaders to pass the word that whenever enemy aircrew were captured they were to be put under immediate cell-arrest or 'unschädlich gemacht' — made harmless. Nothing of this edict was known to the prisoners themselves, and neither did they know that information gathered at the site of their crash had been sent to Dulag Luft ahead of them by teleprinter. Nor did they know how much was revealed by searching the wreckage and their uniforms, which often yielded theatre or cinema tickets, railway passes, ration cards, personal diaries, letters and photographs — all of which gave Rumpel and his team valuable information about bases, squadrons, aircraft and personnel, as well as about conditions in wartime Britain. This information, along with that revealed by prisoners under interrogation, was used to supplement and update the material already gathered by the Fü-Stab and which was kept in the Kommandantur — an archive of press cuttings, documents, recce photos, situation maps, squadron histories, personality profiles and crash files.

Above: **Prisoners mill around awaiting the next tram for Frankfurt — still Line 24 today. (Bundesarchiv)** *Below:* **Today the houses bordering the road continue all the way down Hohemarkstrasse into Oberursel. The one on the left is today No. 129.**

NCOs and other ranks were fortunate to the extent that they possessed little knowledge of intelligence value, and were generally released from interrogation after only one session, if they were interrogated at all. Having been processed, prisoners were then moved to permanent POW camps: officers to Stalag Lufts and Oflags, NCOs and ORs to Stalags and Stalag Lufts.



Once the war began in earnest it was obvious that the facilities at Dulag Luft would have to be expanded. *Right:* **On this plan, the original farmhouse is [1], Kommandant's office [2] and Kommandantur [3] and [4] while the new POW transit camp compound completed in April 1940 lies on the eastern side of the Siedlungsstrasse. The West Block is [5]; Middle Block [6]; East Block [7]; and the main guardroom [8]. Sentry towers [9], [10] and [11] are positioned at the corners. The old chicken farm is [12] and the prisoners' recreation ground [13]. This layout remained until further expansion took place in 1942.**



The prisoners' compound was at last completed in April 1940. Tucked into a corner formed by the junction of the northern end of the Siedlungsstrasse and the narrow road leading east towards Eichwäldchenweg, it was no more than a rectangle, about 160 yards in perimeter, consisting of three single-storey wooden barrack blocks surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence. The fence was illuminated by arc lamps and overlooked by sentry towers — one on the north-east corner, another on the south-west corner, and a third towards the southern end of the eastern fence. About 40 feet high, they were equipped with machine guns and spotlights (not searchlights) and each manned by two men armed with carbines.

To the north lay a chicken farm and the agricultural school. Across the road from the north-eastern sentry tower was the main guardhouse. This was another requisitioned farm building, with two floors, a semi-basement and a high sloping roof of red tiles. To the south of the compound ran the narrow stream and open scrubland as far as Hohemarkstrasse. A portion of this land had been fenced off with barbed wire to provide a recreation field for the prisoners. It was rightfully the property of an old billy-goat, who inhabited a kennel-like shed near the wire and obviously resented the intrusion of RAF prisoners, whom he would attempt to gore.

The prisoners from the converted farmhouse were transferred to their new barracks during the Norwegian campaign. The West Block, nearest the Siedlungsstrasse, contained a small common-room, a bath house and 14 rooms. Each room was furnished with wardrobes, tables, chairs and bunks of white pine. Day and Enselen, as senior officers, had a room each, and the other officers messed two or three to a room.

Top: **In this picture, taken in the autumn of 1941, the main gate to the new compound can be seen between the Middle Block (on the left) and the West Block.** *Right:* **These wooden huts were replaced during the post-war American tenure of the base but now all is destined for demolition.**

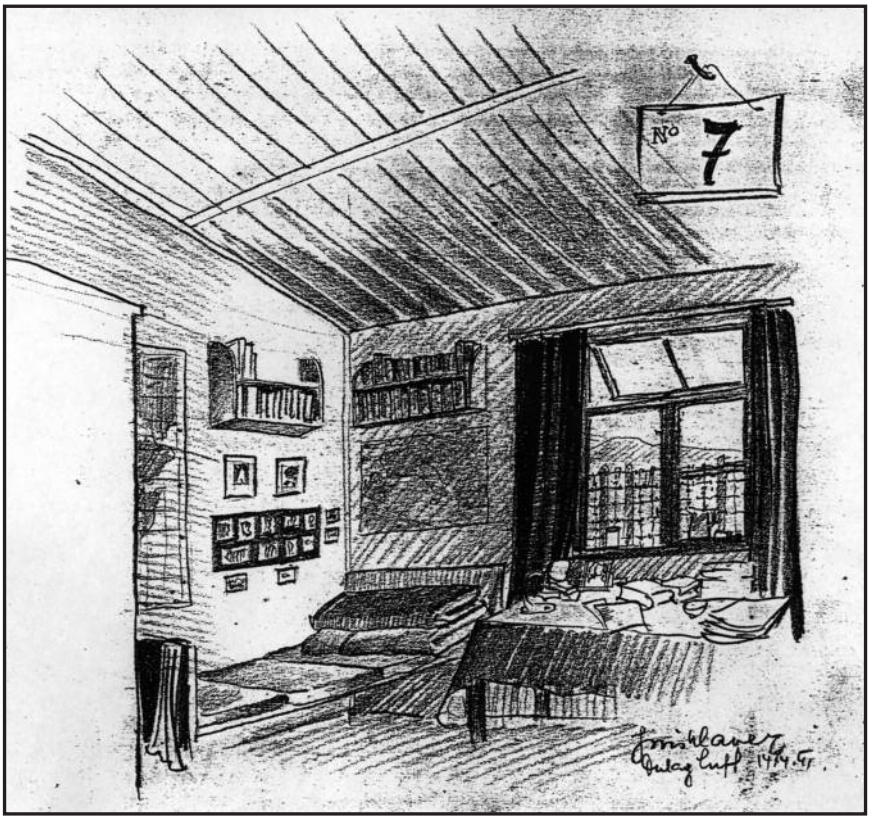
The East Block, opposite the guard house, contained a mess for senior French officers, a general French mess, a general British mess, a large common-room, a general kitchen and the food store. The common-room became known as the 'ante-room', and was decorated by the French with lively murals. There was also a Propaganda Room. Furnished by the Germans as a show-place for the benefit of the Protecting Power, it had well-upholstered armchairs and highly polished tables. Normally it was kept locked and was only ever used three times.

The Middle Block could hold up to 65 prisoners, with four men to a room. This was reserved for new prisoners, who would remain in the transit camp until enough had arrived to justify a purge to a permanent camp — which could take anything from one day to three months

All the rooms in the West Block were wallpapered, but this was not purely for decorative purposes. Germany was ahead of Britain in electronic surveillance, and before completing the West Block the Luftgau technicians had installed microphones in the dividing walls between each room, concealing them in small depressions and covering the walls with paper. The mikes were wired up to a distributor box in the roof and linked to a listening post in the Kommandantur. They also hid microphones under the window sills in the farmhouse cell-block. Conversations were recorded on tape and on 72 rpm bakelite discs in the first-floor rooms of Rumpel's cottage. Enselen and Day soon discovered the microphones, and decided to leave them undisturbed and discuss important matters out of range. To do otherwise might goad the Germans into taking more drastic measures to elicit information. In fact, they gave up listening in after four months: the reception was poor, particularly when two or more prisoners spoke at once.

As the number of new prisoners began to increase, more rooms on the first floor of the farmhouse were opened up to provide further cells. The Germans now furnished each cell with an enamel bowl and desert spoon, a table knife and fork, and an enamel mug. Some of the cells contained copies of the King James Bible and the Forces' Prayer Book, others books by Charles Dickens.

At the same time, the British Permanent Staff decided that all their Red Cross food parcels, whether addressed to individuals or not, should be pooled so that the newcomers would receive extra rations and become acclimatised to POW food before reaching a permanent camp. Anyone wishing to escape on the journey would be given additional rations from the Dulag stock. This was yet another decision, borne out of necessity and with altruistic motives, which would subsequently cause resentment among transient prisoners and rebound on Day and his staff — particularly as, when stocks were high, the Permanent Staff had to throw four-course dinner-parties to prevent food going off.



Interior of a room in the new West Block, occupied by a member of the British Permanent Staff, drawn in April 1941.

POW interrogations were still being carried out by Eberhardt, Fiergutt and Rumpel. Sometimes Rumpel conducted them in his own office, sometimes at the Hohemark. His biggest coup during this period was gathering information on IFF (Identification Friend or Foe), a device which enabled radar plotters in England to establish whether or not an approaching aircraft was friendly. The Germans successfully copied the system. Rumpel also found out the critical speed of Rolls-Royce aero-engines, one of which had been captured and which engineers were testing. On another occasion, a Hampden bomber landed intact in Denmark and was towed to Germany for inspection. Rumpel learned all he needed to know about the bomber from only one interrogation. His written reports, often very bulky, were sent to Berlin every day by a Fieseler Storch flying from a nearby aerodrome.

After the fall of France, the German Interceptor Service established a listening post at Wissant, eavesdropping on radio messages between British pilots and plotters at Group HQ. Thus they knew the number, call sign, leader and base of every RAF squadron, how many aircraft were in the air at any one time, and their intended targets. They could direct their own fighter pilots to intercept them and even establish how many were shot down. Satellites of Dulag Luft were set up in Paris, Chartres, at the former Carlton Hotel in Amsterdam, and in North Africa, so that aircrew captured in the occupied territories could be interrogated quickly.

Electronic surveillance — on the ground and in the air. While Major Rumpel was bugging the rooms in the new West Block, this listening post *(left)* **at Wissant (between Calais and Boulogne) was intercepting radio transmissions by British pilots ensuring that Dulag Luft was provided with up-to-date details of RAF squadrons.** *Right:* **We asked David Davies of the Atlantic Wall Museum at Audinghen to track down the house — it is now called La Butte on the Rue Chopin near the beach.**

Further additions were made that summer to the British Permanent Staff. These included Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, a South African-born lawyer who had been shot down leading No. 92 Squadron on patrol over Calais on May 23; Flight Lieutenant John Madge, a Fairey Battle pilot shot down during the campaign in France; Flying Officer John Gillies, son of a distinguished plastic surgeon and a pilot on Bushell's squadron; Flying Officer Alex Gould, an Australian in the RAF; Flying Officers Vincent Byrne, Benson Freeman, J. C. Hutchison and D. W. Thomas; Pilot Officer Richard Hardy; Sergeants Eric Galloway, J. F. Graham, Michael Joyce and J. G. Slowey; Major Richard Partridge, a Royal Marine in the Fleet Air Arm; Lieutenant-Commander John Casson, another FAA pilot and the son of the famous theatrical couple, Lewis Casson and Sybil Thorndyke; Lieutenant-Commander Jimmy Buckley, a Swordfish pilot with a DSC; and, finally, Major Johnny Dodge, DSO, DSC, a relative by marriage of Winston Churchill. Dodge, who had won his DSC at Gallipoli in the Great War, had rejoined the army in 1939 and had been rounded up at Calais. Although in his mid-forties, he had escaped and been recaptured by the Luftwaffe. He thus arrived at Dulag Luft as an air force prisoner.

As well as being related to Winston Churchill, Dodge had family and connections in diplomatic posts in Berlin, Berne, Geneva and Lisbon, and reckoned that through them he could wangle repatriation in a mutual exchange of prisoners. But first he had to hoodwink the Germans into believing he had been neutralised and would return to civvy-street. In his letters home he praised Hitler for his ability to give the Germans back their self-respect. Meanwhile Dodge's relatives were pulling strings to get him exchanged or invalided home. But all came to nought when prisoner exchanges were banned by Churchill.

Dodge's apparent pro-German attitude had, however, scandalised many transients passing through Dulag Luft. Even more alarming was the presence of Benson Freeman, a pre-war Mosleyite who made no attempt to hide his contempt for Bolshevism and his admiration for Fascism. Roger Bushell, among others, asked Day to order Freeman to keep his views to himself. Day refused, on the ground that German propagandists would have a field day if they learned that British POWs were curtailing freedom of speech amongst their own kind. But Freeman's Fascist leanings did not escape the notice of Eberhardt, who informed Rumpel, and who in turn invited him for lengthy discussions in his office about politics, the war and the Bolshevik threat to Europe. Benson's visits to Rumpel's office did not go unnoticed by transient prisoners either, and before long he was suspected of being an informer, which he certainly was not. But he did become more deeply involved with the German staff.

Members of the Class of 1940. L-R: Flying Officer John Gillies and Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, both of No. 92 Squadron, with Flying Officer Vincent 'Paddy' Byrne. Bushell, who became known as 'Big X' when Escape Officer at Stalag Luft 3, was executed after the Great Escape from Sagan in March 1944 (see *After the Battle* No. 87).

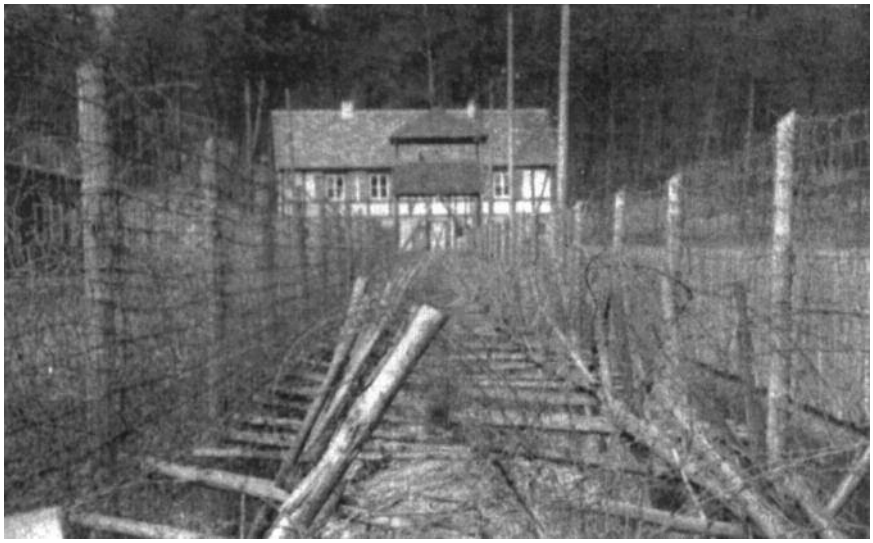
Summer 1940 also saw the introduction of counter-intelligence measures by the prisoners at Dulag Luft, with Day starting a coded-letter operation which would eventually spread to every RAF prison camp in the Greater Reich. In the last week of July, Neil Prendergast, a sergeant pilot from No. 61 Squadron, arrived at Dulag and informed Day that he had been taught an official letter-code by MI9, the section of the War Office responsible for fostering escape and evasion. The code, known as 'Amy', was based on a pocket dictionary with pages measuring no more than 2½ x 4 inches. It took less than an hour for Prendergast to teach Day the code, which could be contained in a normal, chatty letter. The user indicated by the manner in which he wrote the date whether or not his letter contained a message. Prendergast wrote to MI9, registering Day and five of his officers as code operators.

Day's first letters were based on debriefing new prisoners, explaining the circumstances in which they had been shot down. Later messages found their way into the Air Ministry's Weekly Intelligence Summaries, and enabled the RAF to counter German fighter tactics and plot the positions of flak batteries.

Prisoners were allowed to send three postcards and two letters a month. It took about six weeks for POW mail to reach England, and only occasionally did the censors at Dulag Luft delay or lose a letter, usually because they suspected that some POWs had private codes.

Just as Rumpel was upgrading his organisation, so Day upgraded his. On the purely administrative level, he made Jimmy Buckley his Adjutant, with Hutchison as Assistant Adjutant; made Hardy Messing Officer, Gillies Cookhouse Officer, Freeman Clothing Officer and Partridge Sport and Recreation Officer; and appointed Slowey as President of the Mess, and Taylor NCO in charge of the camp canteen. Joyce worked in the store, issuing extra provisions and clothes from Red Cross parcels. He also drew up the officers' laundry list, for which he received payment. From November 1940 onwards he also did the camp carpentry. But with an attempted invasion of Britain imminent, Day also began to think more seriously in terms of his own contribution to the war effort and, especially, of escape. Even if a peace settlement were negotiated between Britain and Germany, Day and his colleagues would remain captives for three or four years: they were potential leaders and might cause trouble for an occupying power. Escape was therefore imperative. Day appointed Bushell head of escape intelligence and supply. Bushell spoke excellent German and his background as a barrister made buttonholing guards for information almost second nature.

Left: **An unidentified prisoner pictured in front of the Kommandantur — this was the second building with that function — see [4] on the plan on page 12. (Bundesarchiv)**
Right: **After the war it became Building No. 996 of Camp King.**



Looking north along the double barbed wire fence on the eastern side of the compound. Sentry tower [11] and the guardhouse [8] can be seen in the background.

The ease with which the POWs gathered information owed itself partly to a lack of security-consciousness on the part of the camp staff. The function of Dulag Luft was purely intelligence, and neither the OKW, nor the Luftwaffe High Command, nor the Abwehr, nor even Rumpel, had given a moment's thought to the possibility that the British Permanent Staff would do anything so churlish as attempting to escape. No escape attempts so far had been from Dulag Luft, although in August 1940 a transient prisoner, Flying Officer Eric Foster, cut through the wire at the Hohemark, only to be recaptured by a policeman at dawn. Security was therefore rudimentary. Hauptmann von Massow, the camp intelligence officer, was the nearest thing to a security officer, and his duties did not go beyond censoring mail and ineffectually probing the occasional parcel. There were no searches, the twice-daily Appelle (roll-calls) were casually conducted, and even the patrolling Alsatians could be bribed with a few squares of chocolate.

But the layout of the camp was such that the only avenue of escape was by tunnel from the West Block. Alex Gould, who had studied geology, was given the responsibility of choosing the site for the tunnel, his exploration of the soil being explained by his newly-created role as 'Gardens Officer'. The entrance would be in the wash-house, adjacent to Enselen's room on the eastern side of the hut. This would enable the tunnellers to clean up quickly after their shift below. The tunnel would pass diagonally under Enselen's room, which would provide a lighting point, under the corridor, under Day's room, then under the wire, a corner of the sentry tower, and the Siedlungsstrasse, to emerge on the far bank of the stream which ran through the recreation field, beneath the road and off into the trees to the west. In all, the distance to be dug was at least 180 feet.

Day put Buckley in charge of operations, and all the Permanents were on the digging roster except Dodge and Day himself, whose absence from the compound would be too conspicuous. This was particularly true from August 1940, when Eberhardt became the camp welfare and liaison officer and visited the compound every day.

Before tunnelling began, Day climbed into the roof of the West Block and disconnected the microphones. There was no reaction from the Germans. But digging did not proceed smoothly. Water lay only a few feet below ground, so the tunnel had to run near the surface. The diggers started by excavating a trench, spreading the dirt across the top-soil beneath the barrack. Once clear of Day's room the tunnel itself began. Digging was gruelling work; it was dark and damp below and the earth was full of rough, sharp stones and rocks. Towards the end of August the tunnellers encountered a huge boulder which would take at least two weeks to dig out. They had hoped to break out in September, while the weather was fine, but now Christmas looked more likely.

In mid-September, Vincent Byrne, Mike Casey and Michael Joyce, all of whom were Irish, were sent for individually and interviewed in the Kommandantur by a board consisting of a woman and two men in civilian suits, one of whom claimed to be Irish. They were asked if they knew Dublin, what they thought about the government in Ireland, and about conditions in the camp. It was clear to all three that the Germans were attempting to recruit Irish prisoners as renegades.

All three reacted differently. Casey treated the notion with the contempt it deserved. Byrne, however, proposed to Day that he go along with the scheme, in the hope that he might eventually be landed in Ireland as saboteur, when he would betray the renegades to the authorities. Day sent a coded letter home seeking sanction for Byrne's scheme, and two months later received approval. Worried that Byrne's motives might be misunderstood by Bushell, who was sensitive to anything that might jeopardise the tunnel, Day informed him about Byrne's subterfuge.

Michael Joyce, however, was subsequently cultivated by Eberhardt and persuaded to spy on his fellow-prisoners, which he continued to do until May 1942 when he was sent to North Africa, in a German uniform, to interrogate British POWs.

By mid-October, the tunnel had progressed under the wire and the sentry tower and had reached the edge of the Siedlungsstrasse. But flooding now made it unworkable, and Buckley decided to close it down for the winter.

On October 22, 26 RAF prisoners were moved to Spangenberg. Among them was Alex Gould, who had been responsible for siting the tunnel.

By the end of 1940, some 800 RAF and Fleet Air Arm prisoners had passed through Dulag Luft, most of them eventually going on to Stalag Luft I at Barth. They had found the atmosphere at Dulag Luft profoundly unsettling. The Permanents were living comfortably — two men to a room, with homely touches such as tablecloths, lampshades and pinups — had plenty of food and spare clothes and appeared to be on good terms with the Germans. But since Barth had opened in July, the prisoners there had received no Red Cross parcels and were subsisting on German rations. Most had only the clothes in which they had been shot down or items of Polish and French uniform supplied from the German stock of war booty. They lived at least six to a room. They were cold, hungry, bored and resentful, and vented their spleen on Day and his Dulag old stagers. The Senior British Officer at Barth sent a letter through German channels accusing Day of 'diverting' personal and communal Red Cross parcels for the use of himself and his staff. When the letter reached Dulag Luft, the task of handing it to Day fell to Eberhardt, who knew its contents and was clearly embarrassed. Day, shocked at the insubordinate tone of the letter, declined to reply.

But Day's troubles were not over. RAF Intelligence had sent a coded message to Stalag Luft I appointing two squadron leaders to conduct an inquiry into his activites amongst those officers who had passed through Dulag Luft. The inquiry took some six months to complete, and a report was sent back very much in favour of the Permanents. The case against them was closed. But no-one — including Day, his staff, the two squadron leaders, and the officers interviewed — was told of the outcome so an element of doubt about the British Permanent Staff remained.

The main guardhouse still stands across the road and roughly parallel with the north-eastern corner of the camp. From here guards could observe prisoners in part of the recreation field.

The escape tunnel ran from the south-west corner of the West Block across the Siedlungsstrasse to emerge close to the stream which ran beneath it in a culvert (see plan page 12). After the war, the Americans constructed a barrack block along the road at this point, effectively hiding our view of the site of the wartime huts, but the tunnel would have crossed roughly on the line of the zebra crossing to emerge in the foreground. Could the filled-in excavation on the right be significant?

During that winter, Day and his staff carried on preparing for their escape. They had mapped out the local paths, were in possession of train timetables, and had built up an escape fund of Reichsmarks equivalent to £15 sterling. Civilian duds were made of converted blankets and items of uniform dyed with boot-polish, with buttons carved from wood and bone. Knapsacks were made from trouser-legs. Griffiths, a gifted amateur artist, forged identity cards, pasting on photos from German propaganda magazines or snapshots taken by willing camp staff.

MI9, in response to Day's requests in coded letters, sent rice-paper maps and escape tips, and Bushell obtained information on the Schaffhausen salient, the long narrow bulge of Swiss territory which jutted into Germany and was reputedly less well-guarded. Bushell and Flying Officer Harvey Vivien (a permanent since late 1940) planned to travel there by train. With their fluent German, they stood the best chance of reaching the frontier.

Work on the tunnel resumed in March 1941. Buckley and his team had to carry out a great deal of maintenance because the stream had broken its banks and flooded the tunnel and much of the trench. Cave-ins had also occurred. It took a month for the tunnel to dry out and to fill in the holes left by falls. As digging progressed, the clay from the tunnel was dispersed under the other two huts. In mid-May the diggers put up a probe, made from a one-inch-diameter metal water pipe painted white for the top two inches so that watchers inside the compound could see it. The probe broke through the road surface for six or seven inches just as a supply lorry was grinding its way along the Siedlungsstrasse. Word got back to the diggers, who hastily withdrew it. Towards the end of the month there was another crisis when builders began to construct a brick support to the culvert under the Siedlungsstrasse. The water in the stream rose to such a level that it was seeping into the tunnel. Day and Bushell spent days persuading the adjutant, Fiergutt, that the dammed water would create a breeding ground for mosquitoes and all manner of disease-carrying flies and bugs that would threaten the health of the camp. Finally, Fiergutt sent an orderly to kick down the bricks, the prisoners watching gleefully as he ruined his highly-polished jackboots.

The tunnel was completed by the end of May and the breakout was planned for 9 p.m. on Sunday, June 1. As it was Whitsun, supervision would be minimal and there would be no German staff in the transit camp. The moon would not rise until midnight, allowing the escapers three hours to sortie. Eighteen men were selected: Day and most of his staff, including Baughan, Boardman, Buckley, Bushell, Casey, Dodge, Gillies, Griffiths, Madge, Partridge, Thurstan, Squadron Leader Nicolas Tindal, Vivian and Wimberley, along with three recent transients, Wing Commander Noel Hyde, Flying Officer D. E. Pinchbeck, and Lieutenant Peter Butterworth of the Fleet Air Arm. A week before the break, Bushell announced his own plan. This involved hiding in the goat-shed in the recreation field on the afternoon of the break, and going over the wire at nightfall to catch a train that night and be well on his way before the hue and cry was raised the next morning. Some of the escapers protested that if his bid failed it would result in a tightening of security and threaten the tunnel break. Nevertheless, Day approved Bushell's plan.

It went off without a hitch, Tindal burying him under the floorboards and covering them with goat's dung. Buckley arranged a miscount on the evening Appell, and at dusk Bushell left his hiding place and escaped without a sound. At 9 p.m., while Flight Lieutenant Donald McHardy organised a noisy diversion, Buckley and Byrne went down and opened the tunnel. Byrne, who was staying behind, hid under the culvert to help the escapers out. The queue at the entrance was controlled by Squadron Leader Eric Elliott, who would succeed Day as SBO. Buckley was first to go, followed by Vivian. Day was sixth on the list, followed by Dodge and Hyde.

All the escapers were recaptured — most, except for Buckley, Bushell and Vivian, within 20 or 30 miles of the camp. But it discredited Rumpel's organisation and nearly ruined his career. An escape involving more than five prisoners was technically a mass escape, and meant that the Kommandant had to alert not only the Wehrmacht, the Kriminalpolizei, the Grenzpolizei (Frontier Police) and his immediate superiors in the local Luftgau or Wehrkreis, but also the Frankfurt Gestapo. More than 3,000 men were mobilised in the subsequent Kriegsfahndung (war man-hunt) to search for the escapers, and Himmler took advantage of the situation by trying to wrest control of Dulag from the hands of the Luftwaffe. He told Hitler that POW security, if carried out according to OKW regulations, was escape-proof. If 18 men had managed to escape, they must have had help. 'The mischief-maker is this Anglophile Rumpel', said Himmler. In his briefcase he had a collection of extracts from POW letters complaining about conditions in their camps and comparing them unfavourably to Dulag Luft. Hitler sent for Göring and Schmid. 'How can I win a war with a defeatist like Rumpel in a key position?' Hitler ranted. 'He must be removed!'

Göring rose to defend Rumpel, and mollified Hitler — at least for the time being — by suggesting that Hauptmann Franz von Werra, the pilot who had escaped from a POW train in Canada and had reached Germany via the USA and Mexico (see *After the Battle* No. 2), should visit Dulag Luft to compile a report on its intelligence and security set-up and make recommendations. Hitler agreed. But the escapers, who were being held in the Frankfurt-Bockenheim gaol, would be removed immediately to another camp.

The day before they were due to leave, Rumpel visited the gaol and shook the hand of each escaper. 'I wish it had been anyone but you we escaped from', Day told him. The prisoners were collected from the gaol by Luftwaffe coach, bound for Frankfurt station where they were to entrain for Stalag Luft I. Among the rations for the journey was a case of champagne, 'with the compliments of Major Rumpel'.

When von Werra visited Dulag Luft, his assessment of the camp's security set-up and intelligence gathering was largely negative. He had been interrogated by RAF Intelligence at Trent Park in Cockfosters, a procedure which relied on the compilation of thoroughly-

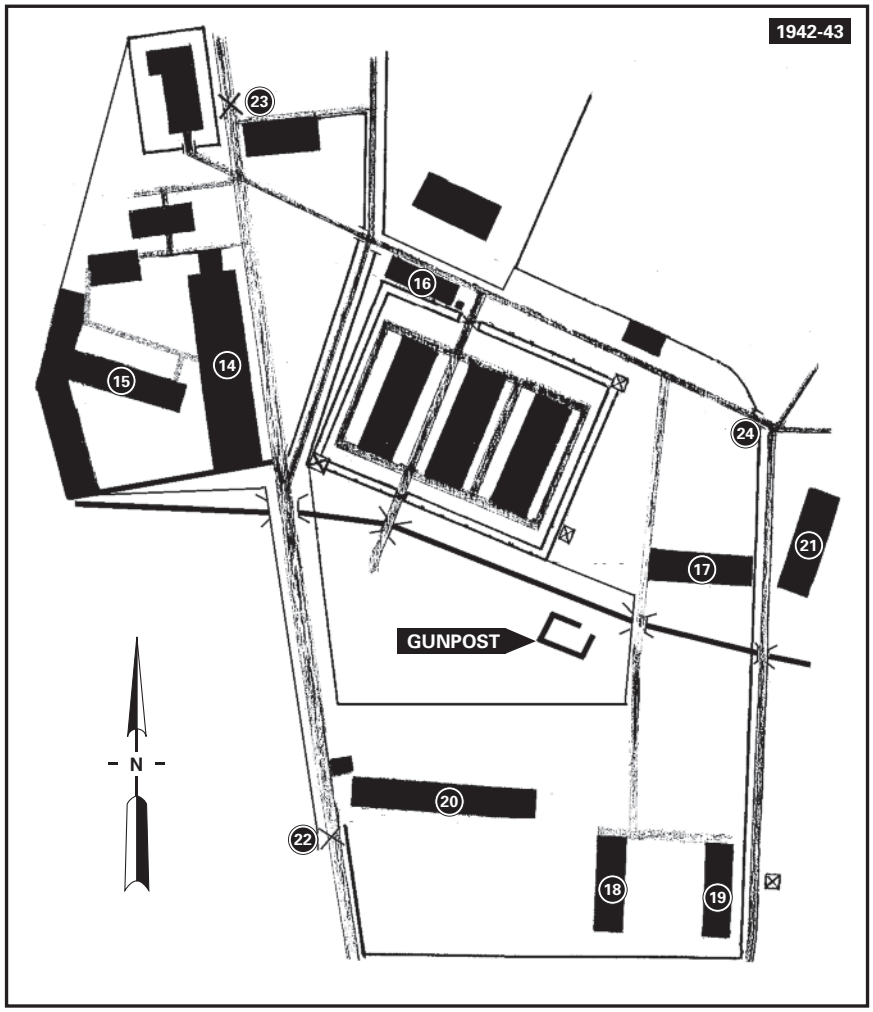
researched dossiers on enemy aircrew containing details which were so personal as to be embarrassing. His interrogator had used these files as a basis for questioning him, systematically assassinating his character and sapping his morale. No such thing occurred at Dulag Luft. The organisation was amateurish. Von Werra recommended that British methods be incorporated into the Oberursel operation. The Abwehr were brought in to make regular barrack and personal searches, and a gun-post was set up in the recreation field. From then on, escaping from Dulag Luft become more difficult. Transient prisoners considered likely to escape were quickly moved on, and future Permanents were chosen from among those prisoners inclined to take captivity more passively. John Casson remained on the staff as Elliott's Adjutant and chief of the camp's coding operations.

Rumpel and Fiergutt continued to interrogate prisoners until the arrival of new personnel. These included Major Gerhardt and Hauptmann Müller. Gerhardt was a handsome pilot who had fought in the Great War and was an expert in electronics. Another expert was a 32-year-old civilian employed by the German Air Ministry, Gustav Bauer-Schlichtegroll, who joined Dulag on October 1. Bauer — as he was commonly known — initially interrogated on technical subjects, but later on questioned bomber crews and Special Duties aircrew who had dropped arms and agents for the resistance movements. By the end of October 1941, the German staff comprised more than 50 members, including four full-time interrogators. Sometimes other specialists would be brought in from Berlin on an ad hoc basis.

The methods of Bauer and his fellow-interrogators took advantage of the new prisoner's fragile state of mind after sudden and violent action, his shame at being captured, his desire for friendly conversation and to leave his lonely cell, and his anxiety about his family back home. All the while he stuck to the formula 'name, rank and number', his interrogator denied him fresh-air exercise, Red Cross rations, washing facilities, books and companionship — and refused to inform his family whether he was dead or alive. The sooner he filled in his Red Cross form and gave the information required, the sooner he would receive some concessions. Moreover, he was haunted by the spectre of a possible beating and the threat of being handed over to the Gestapo should he be unable to prove his combatant status. In fact, the interrogators at Dulag Luft hardly ever resorted to violence, and generally resisted pressure from the Gestapo. According to a report prepared on November 1, 1945 by the US War Department Military Intelligence Service, the treatment of prisoners under interrogation was 'correct', as far as physical violence was concerned. 'An occasional interrogator, exasperated by polite refusals to give more than name, rank, [and] serial number or, more occasionally, perhaps by an exceptionally "fresh" PW may have lost his temper and struck a PW. It is not believed that this ever went beyond a slap in the face dealt in the heat of anger — certainly physical violence was not employed as a policy. On the other hand, no amount of calculated mental depression, privation and psychological blackmail was considered excessive.'

Once they confronted a prisoner, the interrogators relied on intelligence, experience and subtlety. All were academics or former businessmen who spoke good English and had spent some time in England or its colonies, and all had a political education. There was nothing like an innocuous chinwag about Henley Regatta or a heated political barny (which the interrogators nearly always won) to put a prisoner off his guard.

Once a prisoner had accidentally answered one question, he was kept in solitary confinement until he answered others and was warned that, if he did not comply, word would reach his comrades that he had talked.



In November 1941, following several more escapes, Major Rumpel was replaced by Oberstleutnant Erich Killinger and at the same time the interrogation centre was renamed Auswertestelle-West (Western Evaluation Centre) although the actual transit camp remained Dulag Luft. With the entry of the United States into the war, plans were laid to expand the facilities yet again with the addition of a new administration block [14]; a cell block [15]; store room [16]. German quarters were officers' [17]; other ranks' [18] and [19]; security officers' and NCOs' [20]; and a combined interrogation and prison block for the Gestapo [21] nicknamed 'The Shelter'. The camp gates are [22] to [24] .

Sometimes he was told that his comrades had already talked, and his squadron's dossier was thrown on the desk for him to read.

But escape attempts continued. During the summer of 1941, four prisoners broke out of the Hohemark. In September, three officers, Lieutenant-Commander David Lubbock, RN, and Flight Lieutenants Peter Tomlinson and Peter Gardner, were discovered working on a tunnel. They were purged immediately to Oflag XC, the Army camp at Lübeck.

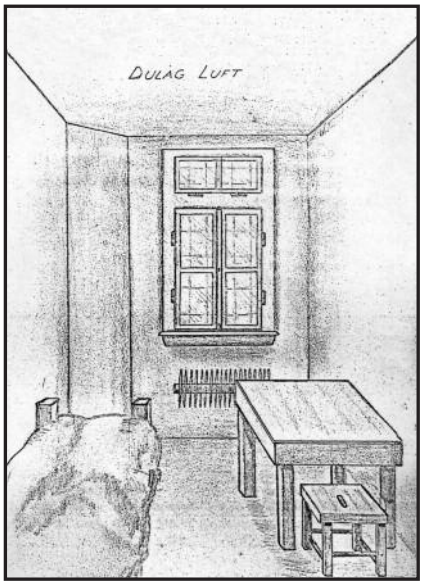
In addition, the Red Cross had produced a booklet which painted a glowing picture of the camp: 'An airman's life at Dulag Luft in the mountains has its advantages', it ran. 'The men are provided with four good meals a day, can walk in the country, and go out to meals at inns.'

In November, Rumpel was finally removed from his post at Dulag Luft. 'I cannot win this war by relying on defeatists', Hitler declared. Rumpel was promoted to Oberstleutnant and put in charge of the Luftwaffe headquarters at Görlitz, the command centre of a complex of flying training fields.

His replacement at Dulag was Oberstleutnant Erich Killinger. He was in many respects a better choice than Rumpel. A naval airman in the Great War, he had been shot down over Russia in 1915 and taken prisoner. He escaped from his prison camp in Siberia and reached Germany after a hair-raising journey through Manchuria, Japan, the USA and Norway. Between the wars he was a buinessman, and in 1939 was called up as a reserve officer in the Luftwaffe, at first flying in the Polish campaign. Because of his age — he was in his late forties — he was given a ground posting as a Luftwaffe welfare officer before being appointed Kommandant of Dulag Luft.

By the time Killinger arrived, Dulag Luft had been given a new name. A similar operation had been opened in the East with the name of Auswertestelle-Ost (Evaluation Centre East), and accordingly the interrogation centre at Oberursel became Auswertestelle-West (Evaluation Centre West), while the transit camp remained a Dulag Luft.

Despite von Werra's recommendations and the appointment of Killinger, escapes continued. In February 1942, a Fleet Air Arm officer, who had given his parole for church parade, escaped en route. Most prisoners, Permanents and transients alike, were appalled at this breach of honour, and felt he was lucky not to have been court-martialled upon recapture. In April, a Hampden pilot, Flight Lieutenant Robert Kee, hid in the roof of Middle Block, his intention being to fool the Germans into believing he had escaped. He would then be spirited out of the compound, hide in the goat-shed and go over the wire at night, just as Roger Bushell had the previous year. John Casson tried to dissuade him, telling him the Germans were already wise to this ruse. But Kee went ahead and was soon discovered.



The cell block *(above)* was opened in October 1942 providing solitary confinement for more than 100 prisoners. This on-the-spot drawing *(left)* by one of the prisoners shows Cell 1B (see plan *opposite*). Note the heater under the window.

By then things were becoming difficult for the British Permanent Staff, and after a series of rows, generally inspired by the presence of Freeman and Joyce, some were asked to sign a document requesting their removal from the camp. Casson and McHardy were purged to the newly-opened Stalag Luft III at Sagan (see *After the Battle* No. 87). The new Adjutant was Flying Officer D.W. Thomas. A Dutchman in the RAF, Pilot Officer Peter van Rood, was briefly attached to the staff as Medical Officer as he had studied medicine before the war.

In May, Michael Joyce went to North Africa to interrogate British prisoners. Finally, in September, he reverted to his RAF identity and returned to Germany. With the aid of the Gestapo he effected an escape from a farm near Koblenz and joined an escape line in order to infiltrate it and turn its members over to the Germans. He reached Gibraltar, and was repatriated to England, where he was awarded the Military Medal and given a commission. After the war, when Eberhardt was captured and interrogated, Joyces's duplicity was revealed. Joyce confessed and was stripped of his medal. Shortly afterwards he resigned his commission.

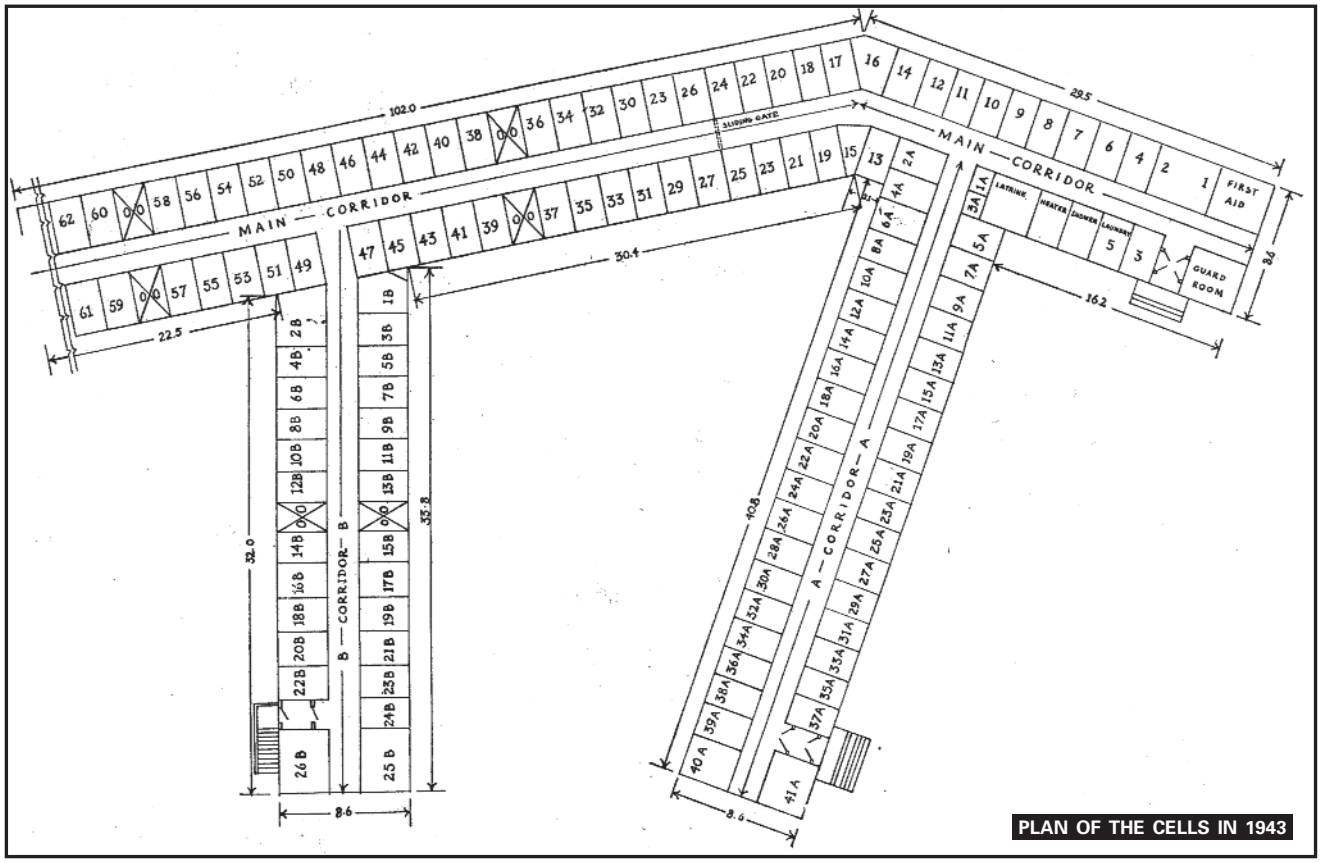
Benson Freeman left Dulag Luft at roughly the same time, staying for three months on a farm ostensibly owned by Eberhardt before joining the German Foreign Office as a script-writer for the 'Germany Calling' service. In 1944 he joined the Waffen-SS, finally surrendering to US forces in south-west Germany in May 1945. After the war, Freeman was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. He told his lawyer: 'This shows just how rotten this democratic country is. The Germans would have had the honesty to shoot me.'

Under Killinger, Auswertestelle-West expanded and the intelligence organisation was stepped up. His first major step was the building of a wooden 'cooler'. Construction started at the end of July 1942 and the cooler was ready for use by October. It contained 103 solitary-confinement cells, a guardroom, a first-aid room, a communal shower-room, a latrine, a laundry and a powerful heating system. Each cell, on average, measured 9ft 9ins long, 6 feet wide and 9ft 2ins high. The walls were lined with fibre board about half-an-inch thick and filled with from two to four inches of insulating material. The floor was of timber boards one inch thick. The close-fitting doors, with only a tiny crack near the floor to allow a flow of air, were four inches thick and also insulated. Furniture consisted of a wooden table and chair, and an iron or wooden bed with a straw-filled palliasse. Near the ceiling on the outside wall was a casement window 9ft 6in square with frosted panes and iron bars on the outside; the windows could be opened inwards by inserting a key in a square lock. Along the top was a fanlight window which was also locked. In the wall near the door leading to the central passage was a wooden knob, which prisoners turned to release a red signal-arm outside and attract the attention of the guards. All the cells were fitted with electric heaters.

While the new cooler was under construction, Killinger's staff was supplemented by Major Horst Barth. A graduate of the University of Leipzig, he had joined the German Merchant Marine in the early 1930s as a radio operator, but volunteered for the Interceptor Service when Germany started to re-arm. He had many forward-looking ideas about the potential of radio, and developed the monitoring and interpreting of radio transmissions emanating from Britain. German Signals Intelligence permitted him to set up an experimental station 15 kilometres north of Emden in north-west Friesland. It was so successful that when the listening-post at Wissant was established he was moved there with his staff. The set-up was known as 'Y' Kompanie. As the operation grew, it fell under the control of higher-ranking officers, and Barth became disillusioned. In spring 1942, he escorted a group of pilots shot down in France to Oberursel and while there toured the camp. ''There I met the Kommandant and his staff and I soon realised I had followed the call to Auswertestelle-West'.

With him he brought almost his entire staff, all of them linguists: Kaspar, Schröder, Schwartz and Weyland. Barth set up a W/T room on the first floor of the old farmhouse cell-block, which now became part of the intelligence set-up. His team of linguists worked round the clock listening to all R/T communications between aircraft and aircraft and base. They recorded and transcribed conversations, and listed the radio frequencies along with their places of origin. Two more Interceptor Service NCOs monitored BBC broadcasts, transcribed them and sent the information therein to Killinger, who then cut out the unpalatable facts and passed the expurgated reports to his interrogation officers. The W/T room was later linked to another listening post in the mountains above the camp.

The wooden huts were demolished by the Americans after the war. This present-day comparison was taken from the roof of the administration block.



PLAN OF THE CELLS IN 1943

Next door to the W/T room was the photographic room, where staff developed and printed all film found on prisoners, along with that recovered from the camera guns salvaged from their aircraft.

Over a period of months, Killinger brought in several of his old cronies to oversee the expansion and improve interrogation methods. The first was Major Heinz Junge. Already 50 years old, Junge had served as a field artillery officer from 1911 to 1914 and as a pilot in the Great War, finally being shot down and captured by the British in February 1918. After his release in November 1919 he emigrated to South America, working as a commercial traveller. In 1932, while in Peru, he joined the Nazi Party because of his hostility to Communism. He returned to Germany in 1935 and realised he had made a mistake. Although it was now difficult to leave the country, he decided to return overseas, and was helped by Killinger. When the second war broke out he was representing the German aircraft industry in Peru. Two years later, he returned to Germany and was then sent as assistant air attaché to Buenos Aires. He was back in Germany in 1942 and was sent to Dulag Luft at Killinger's request to be chief interrogator. Junge spent three months learning the ropes before becoming de facto head of the interrogation department.

Horst Barth, as well as running the W/T room, became the head of the fighter interrogation unit, with Schröder and Weyland interrogating USAAF fighter pilots. In the bomber branch were Ulrich Haussmann, Oberleutnants Arthur Gabrielson and Wiebach, and Leutnants Horn and Karl Schmidt-Luders.

Next came Otto Boehringer, who was 48 when he arrived at the centre in 1943. Boehringer, the owner of a factory in Mannheim, had been a Hauptmann in a balloon barrage unit from the outbreak of the war to May 1940, when he left the service to return to his works. In November 1942 he heard that Killinger, whom he had known in Java, was Kommandant of Dulag Luft, and went to visit him. Killinger proposed that he remuster and join him there as a specialist in commercial interrogations. Boehringer agreed on the proviso that he be allowed to visit his factory two days a week. He joined the staff on January 1, 1943, but he had difficulties with the English language and was taken off interrogations at the beginning of April and instead became Killinger's Executive Officer in charge of increasing the establishment.

Left: **Major Horst Barth arrived in the summer of 1942 to set up a radio intercept station in a room** *(right)* **on the first floor of the old farmhouse [1]. This provided first-hand information on Allied air activities and primed the interrogation staff.**

The administration block ([14] on the plan on page 17) as it appeared early in 1999. It was built in the winter of 1942-43 and housed the Interrogation Room, the Records Section, the Map Room and the Situation Rooms.

In November 1942, the Luftgau construction unit had started building a new administrative block along the western edge of the Siedlungsstrasse, a long wooden barrack into which Boehringer now moved his new establishment. Between them, Boehringer and Junge divided the information held in the old Kommandantur into specialist areas and gave each its own room as follows:

Document Evaluation Room. This produced 80 per cent of Auswertestelle-West's information by scouring Allied newspapers, periodicals and books; searching the pockets of captured aircrew, and salvaging material from aircraft that came down in German territory. This section was known as the BUNA, short for Beute Und Nachrichten Auswertung (Booty and Information Evaluation), and was led by Feldwebel Bert Nagel. A former professor at Heidelberg, he was one of Germany's foremost experts in literature, particularly Goethe and Faust, and liked to quote from Hamlet as he searched through prisoners' possessions.

Yellow File Room. Collecting biographical information on Allied personnel from newspapers, magazines, awards lists, radio broadcasts and censored POW mail, Yellow File staff carefully filed it all on index cards for quick reference. The Yellow Card Registry was led by Unteroffizier Gomman.

Squadron History Room. Here, staff gathered information on every RAF and USAAF squadron — their past and current bases, leading personalities, postal addresses, and the special equipment they were known to operate. This department was run by Frau Biehler.

Map Room. In this room, a large collection of maps was kept for interrogators and documents experts. All the rooms dealing with documents, files, squadron histories and maps came under the heading of Records Section, the commander of which was Hauptmann Kurt Schneidewindt.

Attack Room. Each day a new map was prepared displaying British and American air operations during the past 24 hours. Based mainly on German radar trackings and Observer Corps reports, it showed targets, routes, results of missions, numbers of aircraft involved and even cancelled actions. Information gleaned from interrogations in progress was incorporated in the display so that each interrogator had access to the work of others.

Situation Rooms. There were two such rooms, one for the RAF and one for the USAAF. Each displayed maps showing the locations of recent raids, the progress of raids still taking place, and the front lines of opposing armies. The maps also showed details of ferrying flight and transport movements.

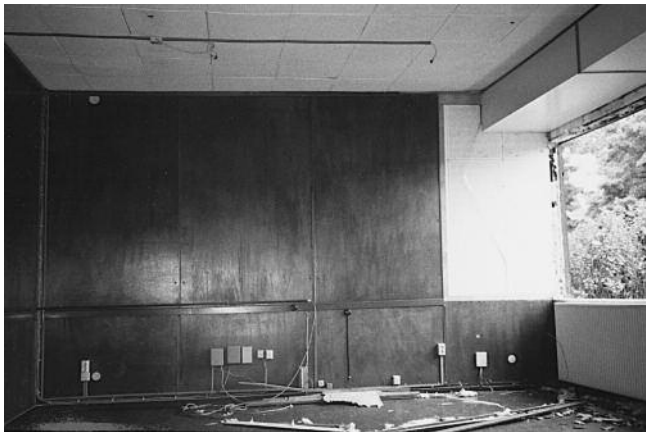
Press Evaluation Room. A staff of translators went through all copies of Allied newspapers for pertinent information, which was then passed on to the Yellow File Room and the Squadron History Room.

Technical Room. As an aid to technical interrogations, staff in this room maintained a library on Allied equipment, including technical reports compiled by previous interrogators, and a museum of flying instruments, radar equipment, etc. (But the Germans did not excel in his field, and this department was one of the weakest.)

Crash File Room. This existed to plot all RAF and USAAF crashes in Germany and the occupied territories. Each crash was given a number, and a file was opened containing the type of aircraft, location of crash, and whatever details of the crew and their squadron that emerged through interrogation and the examination of aircraft markings. The information the Red Cross received concerning missing, dead and imprisoned aircrew was largely the result of the work carried out in this room.

The walls of these rooms were of fibreboard, similar to that used in the construction of the cooler. Interrogations were carried out in Room 47, which differed from most of the rooms in that it had panelled walls.

Outside the northern wire of the transit camp, towards the end nearest the Siedlungsstrasse, another block was built as a store-room for prisoners' clothing and toiletries. Two more barracks were erected south of the recreation field for the German senior officers and the female staff. (Junior officers continued to live in hotels in the nearby villages.) A tarmac path was laid down leading from the main guardhouse to the new barracks.



Left: **The main corridor and** *right* **Room 47 where prisoners were interrogated. The windows have been smashed by vandals.**

Part of the new security measures introduced at the beginning of 1943 included surrounding the entire camp with barbed wire. *Left:* This was the site of the entrance gate [22] on the Siedlungsstrasse. The building on the left is the southern end of the extension to the admin block which was added later that year. *Right:* Another entrance gate [24] lay on the Eichwäldchenweg — it still survives albeit with a modern sentry box. The main guardhouse [8] can be seen in the distance.

On the advice of Killinger's new Chief of Security and Intelligence, Hauptmann Offermann, a barbed-wire fence was thrown up round the entire site. It started 300 yards north of Hohemarkstrasse, running in an east-west direction; ran up the western side of Eichwäldchenstrasse; past the main guardhouse and the chicken farm to the north of the transit camp, then down in a north-south direction behind the old cooler building, the Kommandant's office and the cells.

The main entrance was through a double gate across the Siedlungsstrasse, 300 yards in from Hohemarkstrasse. The gate was now overlooked by a guardroom and the security officers' and sergeants' quarters. Another gate at the northern end of the Siedlungsstrasse led to the model housing estates and agricultural school. At the eastern end of the narrow road leading past the transit camp and the main guardhouse was another double gate giving on to Eichwäldchenstrasse.

On the eastern side of this road, towards the southern end, another sentry tower was built and, opposite the gate, another wooden hut, containing Gestapo offices, interrogation rooms and more solitary confinement cells. It was referred to by the prisoners variously as 'The Bunker' or 'The Shelter'. Here members of the Frankfurt Gestapo, led by Oberst Braeder, were occasionally permitted to interrogate prisoners. The Gestapo liaison officer at Oberursel was Walther Schmidt.

On May 12, 1943, the medical arrangements at Auswertestelle-West were put in the charge of Dr Ernst Ittershagen, a 35-year-old orthopaedic specialist from Frankfurt. He became chief doctor for prisoners at the Hohemark and visited the medical inspection room in the camp almost every morning, staying for three hours. He also arranged with the Luftgau at Wiesbaden to use the Luftwaffe hospital in Frankfurt to carry out X-rays, blood tranfusions and operations and to use the facilities in another hospital in Bad Homberg. His staff at the Hohemark consisted of three German medical orderlies and four British. None of them had much training and mostly they just dressed wounds.

According to testimony given by Ittershagen after the war, there were another four German MOs on round-the-clock duty at the camp, and every new arrival in the cells was seen by a medical orderly 'within a very short time of arrival'. They placed a red cross on the cell-door of each prisoner requiring treatment. Sometimes Ittershagen visited these cells himself. Either way, he listed all sick and wounded prisoners and gave the list to Junge for approval. Severely wounded prisoners were taken to the Hohemark immediately, but the walking wounded sometimes had to wait a day or two, especially if the clinic was overcrowded.

Perhaps because of the presence of the Gestapo — and particularly of Braeder, who was a thoroughly nasty piece of work — interrogation techniques became tougher, with some prisoners being subjected to intense heat-treatment from the radiators which turned the cells into sweat-boxes. The first such incidents, according to evidence presented at the Dulag Luft trial at Wuppertal in November and December 1945, took place between May 16 and 19, 1943. The sweat-box victims were Squadron Leader James Cairns and Warrant Officers Victor Bain, Gerald Clarke, John Gale, Robert Lang and Norman Rees, all of whom were subject to varying degrees and lengths of heat-treatment from the 1½-kilowatt heaters, and some of whom were also denied medical attention. All testified or sent affidavits stating that the cell windows were locked shut; that the heat was so intense that all metal objects, such as the bedstead, were too hot to touch; that they were dripping with sweat; and that the atmosphere was so stifling that they had to strip, lie on the floor and try to breath air through the crack at the foot of the door. In some cases, the treatment only stopped after prisoners had given away information; in some cases the let-up was inexplicable. On reaching the transit camp, these prisoners complained to Squadron Leader Elliott, who sent a formal complaint to the Protecting Power.

Heinz Junge was on leave when the incidents took place, and Boehringer was standing in for him. When Boehringer heard of the over-heating he reported it to Killinger. Killinger called it a 'bloody scandal' and sent a message to Junge ordering it to be stopped. Towards the end of 1943, Killinger received a vaguely-worded letter of complaint from the British Government, and asked his assistant, Unteroffizier Herbert Böttner, to draft a reply. This said that as no names and no concrete details had been given, it was impossible to investigate the complaint. But there had been 'a technical defect of the heating system arising from the bombing of Frankfurt or some place in the neighbourhood'.

After the war, at least three other ex-POWs claimed to have been subjected to heat-treatment: Flying Officer I. Tweddell, Flight Lieutenant Eric Williams and Major Jerry Sage of the Office of Strategic Services. Tweddell passed through Oberursel at the same time as John Gale, and his claim is credible. However, Williams passed through in December 1942, and Sage shortly afterwards, months before the recorded overheating incidents occurred. Significantly, neither Williams nor Sage offered any evidence at the Dulag Luft trial, only referring to the treatment in their memoirs, published years afterwards.

The isolated Gestapo 'Shelter' or 'Bunker' [21] lay outside this gate on the eastern side of the road. It has since been demolished and this building, constructed for American use, now occupies the site.

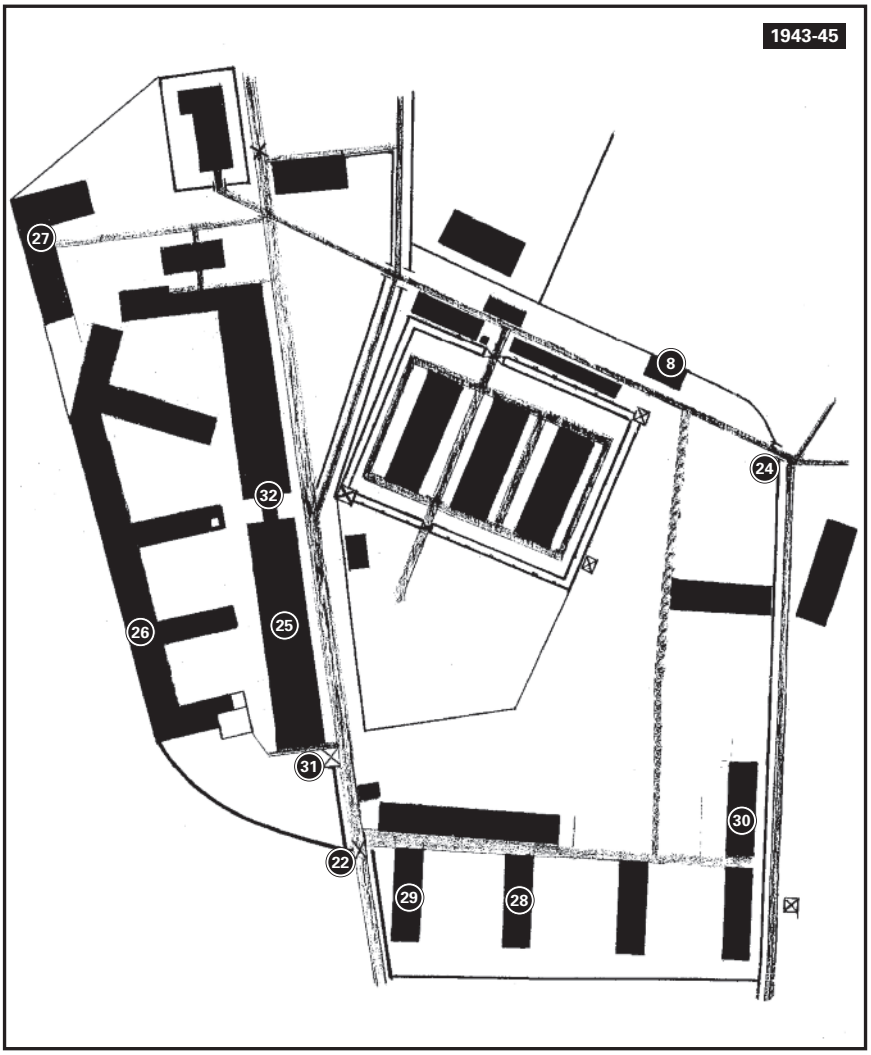
In August 1943, the interrogators at Oberursel 'turned' another RAF sergeant, an air-gunner from North Wales called Raymond Hughes. Threatened with the Gestapo, he broke down, not only filling in his own Red Cross form but also agreeing to help complete others. Known from then on as Herr Becker, he was transferred to Berlin in October where he was offered a commission in the British Freikorps and did radio broadcasts in Welsh to the Welsh regiments serving in North Africa. At his court-martial in August 1945, he was found guilty on five counts of treason and sentenced to five years in gaol.

Auswertestelle-West, in the meantime, was suffering from overcrowding. By the end of 1943, an average of 1,000 prisoners a month were passing through the interrogation centre, and the number of German officers on the intelligence staff had risen to nearly 50. In 1944 this would increase to 65, with up to 100 other ranks; the administrative staff, comprising one guard company and one Luftwaffe construction company, numbered about 240 personnel. Also attached to the establishment were representatives of the Kriegsmarine and the Luftwaffe equivalents of Fighter Command, Maintenance Command and Technical Training Command.

To accommodate this further increase in prisoners and personnel, another round of construction work was undertaken in the autumn of 1943. The stream running across the camp was laboriously filled in and a new administrative block was built a few metres to the south of the original one, the two being linked by an overhang creating a passage between them from the Siedlungsstrasse to the cooler. Three new wings were added to the cooler, one containing a further 24 cells, and the others a new POW reception room, a room for the strip-searching of prisoners, and a semi-basement with additional cells for the overflow of prisoners awaiting interrogation. The semi-basement was known by them as 'The Snake Pit'. The Medical Inspection Room became the crew room, where the receptionists attempted to persuade prisoners to queue up behind their respective aircraft captains. A new sick bay was opened up on the first floor of the converted farmhouse.

To the north of the cells a combined canteen and officers' mess was built for staff which Boehringer ran until the end of the war. Three more barracks were erected at the southern end of the camp — a new barrack for officers and two for the female staff. Unaccountably, in view of the increase in the number of prisoners, the eastern side of the recreation field was made out of bounds and fenced off.

Killinger, however, was becoming increasingly worried about the frequency of Allied air raids. Oberursel's warning siren sounded 539 times during the war — on average, once every three days — and although Oberursel was not always the target, raids became more frequent and dangerous as the war progressed. Oberursel had suffered its first air raid of the war on the night of June 5/6, 1940, but had emerged relatively unscathed. However, a heavy raid took place on August 24/25, 1942, destroying several houses and blowing out the windows of a local church. Another raid on February 8, 1944 resulted in Flak inadvertently hitting Waldlust, only 900 metres to the west of the camp. On March 21, six bombs and six heavy mines were dropped near the Hohemark, hitting the forest and badly damaging 25 houses, and on September 29 a further 56 houses were damaged when bombs fell on Liebfrauenstrasse, not far from Oberursel station and the tram stop where prisoners began their journey to the camp. At the end of December 1944,



Additions in the big building programme in the autumn of 1943 included extending the administration block to the south [25]; adding new wings [26] to the cooler; a canteen/officers' mess [27] and additional barracks [28], [29] and [30].

Left: **This was the entrance gate [31] from the Siedlungsstrasse into the new POW reception area and cell block.**

Right: **The gate lay here, at end of the new extension to the administration block.**

Auswertestelle-West, as it was then called, in 1944. Another view taken from the Reichslehrsiedlung community house and kindly provided to us by Mozart Kaufman (ex-USAAF and author of *Fighter Pilot*) who obtained it in 1945. To the left lay three blocks of the original camp with the recreation field, the security officers' and sergeants' barracks beyond. To the right, the old Kommandantur buildings, with the admin block and the cooler behind.

reserve fuel tanks jettisoned from fighter aircraft fell on the motor factory in Hohemarkstrasse, causing considerable damage and killing one of the workers. Two more workers — one German and one French — were killed in a low-level attack on a machine factory on March 2, 1945. A few days before the end of the war, on March 20, Kupferhammer was attacked by Typhoons, seven rockets hitting another factory and a forced-labour camp holding 250 Russian and Polish prisoners; one child was killed.

Dulag Luft itself was not hit in any of these raids, but Killinger had the roofs of the buildings painted with the letters 'POW' so as to prevent the RAF and USAAF from bombing the camp and, he hoped, Oberursel. Frankfurt, on the other hand, was suffering heavily. It was bombed by the RAF 13 times from 1939 to 1941; six times in 1942; seven times in 1943; and eleven times in 1944. The USAAF bombed it in October 1943, and 12 times in 1944. Citizens were being evacuated in their thousands.

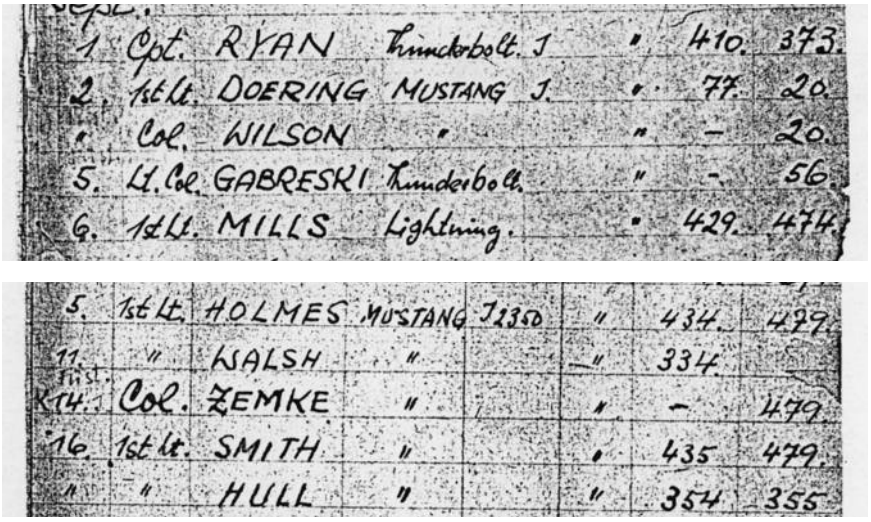
Rumours reached the ears of the British Permanent Staff that the transit camp would soon be relocated, and several put in for transfers to permanent camps. In fact, RAF Permanents had been dropping out gradually during the past year, including Warrant Officer Taylor, who had left in February 1943, and their places were being taken by USAAF officers and non-coms. On September 10, 1943, the transit camp at Oberursel was closed and this side of the operation was transferred to the Palmengarten park in the centre of Frankfurt-am-Main. From that time onwards, Oberursel was an interrogation and evaluation centre only, and after

questioning new prisoners were transferred in batches to the Palmengarten to await transportation to permanent camps.

The new transit camp was a mile northwest of the main railway station. Until new barracks were built, the prisoners lived in tents. Although the obstensible reason for the move was congestion at Oberursel, it is clear that it was also done to deter Allied air attacks on Frankfurt. The Protecting Power visited the camp, and their report dated November 15, 1943 stated: 'This visit leaves a bad impression because of the new situation of the Dulag, so exposed to attacks from the air, which is not in conformity with Article 9 of the Convention.'

By February 1944, most of the Permanent Staff were American. In March, the new transit camp was bombed by the Allies (killing one prisoner and no Germans) and a new, bigger compound was opened further north, near the cathedral town of Wetzlar.

Left: **The passage [32] between the old [14] and new [25] admin blocks. The building number emanates from American days when, we are told, the building seen on the far side of the archway was Camp King's prison block appropriately occupying the site of the wartime cooler.** *Right:* **The entrance from the passage to the new block.**



1.	Cpt. RYAN	Thunderbolt. J.	"	410.	373.
2.	1st Lt. DOERING	MUSTANG J.	"	77.	20.
"	Col. WILSON	"	"	—	20.
5.	Lt. Col. GABRESKI	Thunderbolt.	"	-	56.
6.	1st Lt. MILLS	Lightning.	"	429.	474.

5.	1st Lt. HOLMES	MUSTANG J.2350	"	434.	479.
11.	" WALSH	"	"	334.	
1st.					
K14.	Col. ZEMKE	"	"	-	479.
16.	1st Lt. SMITH	"	"	435	479.
"	" HULL	"	"	354	355

Left: **Obergefreiter Hanns-Joachim Scharff — the Luftwaffe's master interrogator whose story was told by Raymond Toliver in *The Interrogator* published in 1997. We are indebted to Raymond for allowing us to use a number of pictures from his book including those reproduced on these pages. Scharff maintained a log book of his interrogations — listed on these extracts is the US top scoring ace, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Gabreski, who crash-landed after the propeller of his P-47 hit the ground while strafing Bassinheim airfield seven miles east of Coblenz on July 20, 1944, and Colonel Hubert Zemke, the brilliant leader of the 56th and 479th Fighter Groups whose P-51 broke up in a storm near Celle on October 30, 1944.**

But the overcrowding at Oberursel did not ease off. The average monthly intake doubled to 2,000 in 1944. The peak month was July, when 3,000 Allied airmen and paratroopers were processed. Despite OKW directives, Oberursel only had the capacity to accommodate 200 men at any one time, but the POW strength on any one day sometimes exceeded 250, and often as many as five men at a time were occupying the solitary-confinement cells. The Hohemark was also overburdened, with stretcher cases arriving straight from Oberursel station, and Ittershagen only managed to requisition another five beds for POWs. Because of the heavy air raids on Frankfurt, it became impossible to do X-rays there except at night.

Thus, despite the proximity of Hohemark clinic and the medical room on the camp site, prisoners suffering from shock received no treatment, and neither did those with minor wounds. Some POWs arrived at permanent camps still wearing dirty field-dressings which had not been changed at Oberursel.

Other breaches of the Geneva Convention occurred. While most prisoners remained in solitary for only a few days, surly prisoners were held as long as 30 days, the maximum time allowed by the Convention as a punitive measure. One USAAF officer, Captain William N. Schwartz, was imprisoned for 45 days. The behaviour of interrogators became more threatening and their language violent. It was not uncommon for interrogators to shout at prisoners, call them 'murderers of children', keep them on starvation rations and threaten to keep them in the cells indefinitely. Some were threatened with death as spies unless they identified themselves as aircrew by revealing technical information on such subjects as radar or air combat tactics. Sometimes fake firing-squads assembled outside the cells and 'shot' the comrades of intransigent prisoners.

Such intimidation was found to yield poor results, and the interrogators reverted to the 'kid gloves' approach. This was partly due to the arrival of another interrogator, Obergefreiter Hanns-Joachim Scharff, who had initially joined the staff at Oberursel as assistant to Schröder and Weyland. Born in Greiz, near Leipzig, in 1907, Scharff later married the daughter of a British air ace from the First World War, Lieutenant-Colonel Claude Stokes, DFC, who had been killed by one of von Richthofen's squadron. In peace-time Scharff was the director of the Johannesburg division of Adlerwerke, which manufactured cars, tanks and aircraft. When the war broke out, he was on holiday with his wife and children in Germany. His exit visa was revoked and he found himself, at the age of 32, pressed into the Wehrmacht as a Panzergrenadier. In February 1943, Scharff was about to be sent to the Russian Front when his wife persuaded a German general to transfer him to a Dolmetscher-Kompanie (Interpreters' Company) and thence, in January 1944, to Oberursel.

In May 1944, Schröder and Weyland went on a joy-ride in a Fieseler Storch with a fighter pilot from the base at Eschborn. The aircraft crashed into some trees, killing all three, and Scharff was put in charge of interrogating American fighter pilots. With Dulag Luft's thick dossiers at his finger-tips, he developed a technique that almost invariably achieved results and made him the darling of the Luftwaffe's intelligence community. Scharff's first assistant was Feldwebel Walter Hanemann. A former Stuka pilot who had flown in the Polish and French campaigns, he had been wounded in combat and sent to the new transit camp at Frankfurt as an interpreter. When the transit camp was moved to Wetzlar, he went with it. But because he had lived in America, had married an American woman and learnt to fly there, he was considered likely to mollycoddle prisoners. Threatened with a posting to the Russian Front, he phoned Scharff from Wetzlar, and with Horst Barth's help, Scharff arranged a transfer to Oberursel.

Once Hanemann had been trained by Scharff, they divided the work between them, Hanemann dealing with pilots from fighter groups of the US Twelfth and Fifteenth Air Forces and the South African Air Force, operating from North Africa and Italy, and Scharff dealing with those captured in north-west Europe. From then on Scharff's assistant was Otto Engelhardt, known as 'Wild Bill' because of his pre-war experiences in the Canadian Rockies. Another interrogator, Leutnant Günther Haas, who spoke English and French, took frequent trips to Paris to question pilots shot down in France.

Scharff's snapshot of Gabreski, centre, and Captain Kenneth Smith, ex-335th Squadron, 4th Fighter Group, who had recently undergone a skin graft on his face at the Hohemark clinic. Scharff had taken both airmen to the outdoor swimming pool in Oberursel to try to soften them up. On the left is one of the Luftwaffe guards, NCO Schröder.

This series of pictures of American airmen in the reception area at the southern end of the cooler was taken by Scharff from his office window in the admin block.

Obergefreiter Scharff would later become famous as the Luftwaffe's 'master interrogator'. He was well-named: Scharff, in English, means 'sharp' — and this he certainly was. He always wrested some information out of his prisoners, yet few of them knowingly gave information, and none knew what its value was to the German war effort. One ex-prisoner reckoned that Scharff 'could have wrung a confession of infidelity out of a nun'.

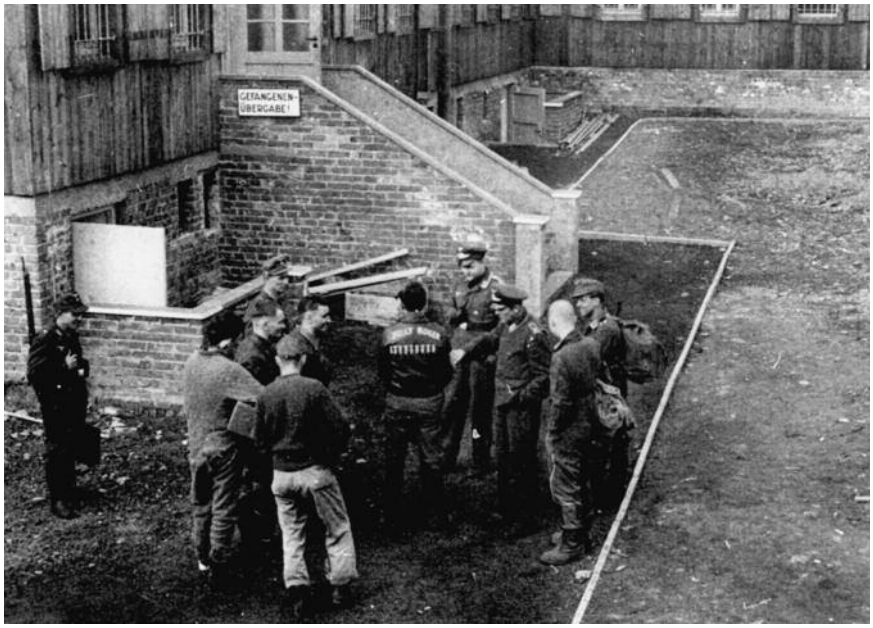
Because he seldom wore uniform, but a grey suit, few prisoners realised he was only a corporal; thus he was accorded the respect due to an officer. This was undoubtedly a useful weapon in his arsenal. Another was the camp's collection of photos taken at Allied airfields, showing not only aircraft with their squadron markings but also many famous fighter pilots. He would often point to one of the photos and say: 'Isn't that a great picture of Hubert Zemke?' 'No,' the prisoner would reply, 'that's not Zemke. That's Francis Gabreski'. When these American fighter aces were eventually captured, Scharff immediately picked them out from the crowds of incoming prisoners.

As far as is known, Scharff never once bullied, threatened, swore or shouted at a prisoner. Instead, Scharff encouraged him to question the worth of the 'name, rank and number' formula. This was particularly effective if the prisoner had been captured in civilian clothes while being aided by an escape line. Name, rank and number were not sufficient to prove his identity as a combatant. For all Scharff knew, he could be a spy — or even a German deserter posing as an American prisoner in order to sit out the rest of the war.

Throughout the latter half of 1944, Killinger and his interrogators had come under increasing criticism from the Gestapo for 'Anglophile tendencies, defeatism and transgression of Service rules'. Once again, the SS was demanding punishment of the offenders and attempting to take over the interrogation centre. The chief of the Frankfurt Gestapo, Braeder, cooked up 15 charges of fraternisation and defeatism against Killinger and was all set to have him tried before the dreaded People's Court. But Killinger's immediate superior at the Fü-Stab, General Rudolf Wodark, forestalled Braeder by having Killinger tried before a Luftwaffe tribunal instead. The tribunal took place in November 1944, and he was acquitted. However, his Adjutant was transferred. Böttner took his place.

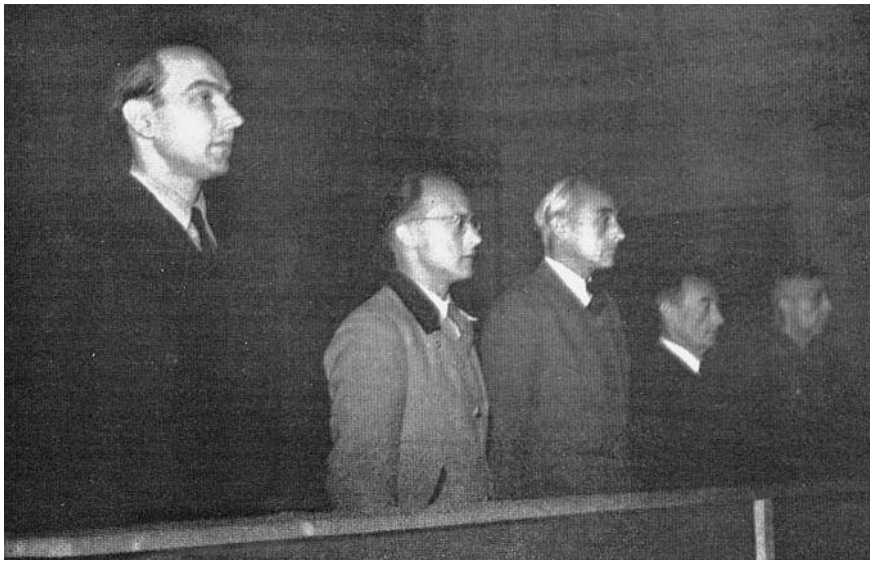
On March 19, 1945, as Patton's Third US Army advanced upon the Rhine, Luftwaffe headquarters decided to disperse the intelligence operation from Oberursel. Major Wallschmidt took one team, comprising Hauptmann Tobler, Scharff, Dr Nagel, two other sergeants and two secretaries, north-east to Weimar. Another team, led by Killinger himself, evacuated to Nürnberg-Buchenbühl. They burnt most of their records and carried the rest with them.

Before long, Wallschmidt's team was ordered to move again, this time to Altenburg. They were trying to make their way there when they were captured by US forces. The Americans denied German prisoners proper POW status, re-classifying them as 'Disarmed Enemies' so that they received no Red Cross parcels. Underfed and sleeping in the open in overcrowded conditions, thousands starved or froze to death. Finally, Scharff was released, fleeing to Western Germany to escape the Russians, who had put a price on his head as a 'Capitalist'.



Note the 'Jolly Roger' slogan on the jacket which added fuel to the efforts of the German propaganda machine to portray US bomber crews as 'Luftgangsters'.

Dulag Luft taken by the US 7th Photo Group on March 13, 1945. The roofs have been painted to identify it as a POW camp. Twelve days later it was captured by US forces advancing north of Frankfurt.



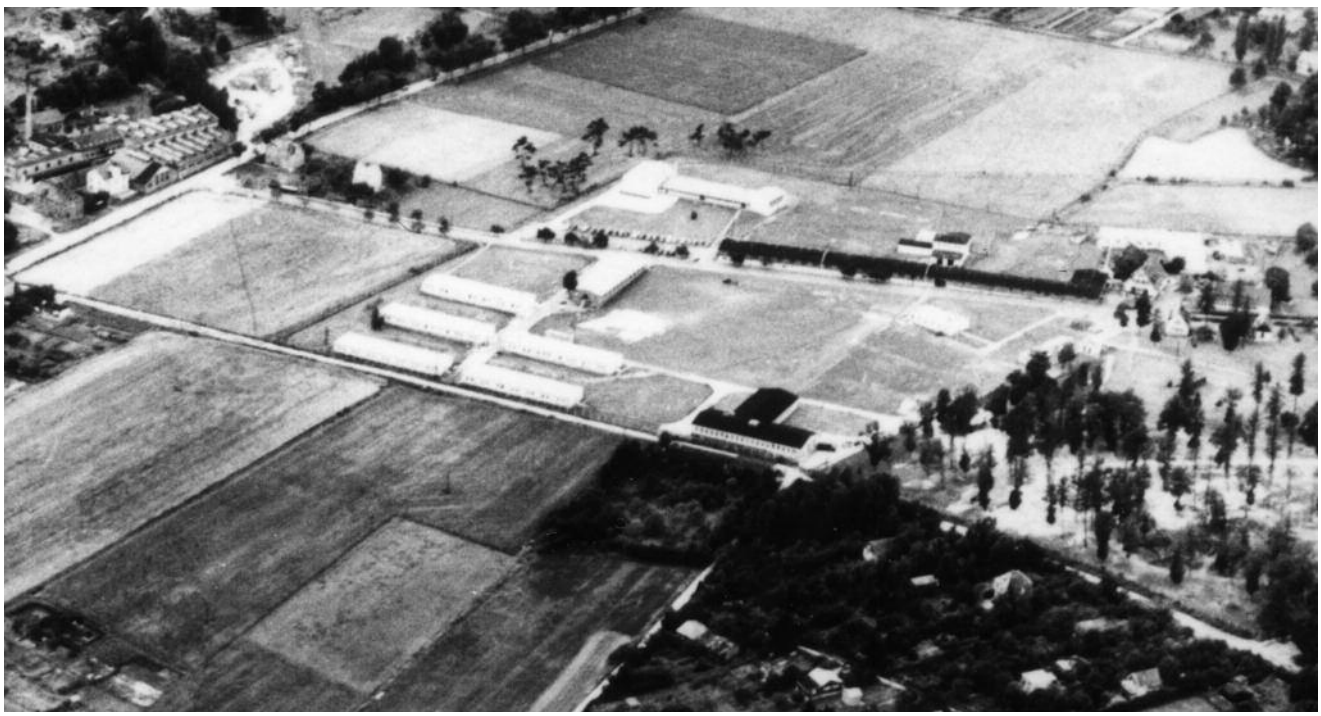
As Auswertesteelle-West was already an interrogation centre, the Americans quickly put it to use as the HQ of the 513th Intelligence Corps Group. When the centre was renamed Camp King, many well-known German prisoners passed through its gates including several of its former masters. Here (L-R) Bauer-Schlichtegroll, Eberhardt, Boehringer, Junge and Killinger stand accused of ill-treating British prisoners at Dulag Luft.

Buchenbühl was liberated by the US Seventh Army on April 16, when Killinger and 200 German guards fell into the hands of soldiers from the 45th Division. Earlier, on March 25, American troops had overrun Hohemark and Oberursel. They found Auswertestelle-West no longer a going concern, and used it as a POW and DP camp. When the US Military Government set up its District Bureau, the site became the HQ of the 513th Intelligence Corps Group, who renamed it Camp King. One of their first prisoners was Killinger, who was discovered in an Army cage and returned under escort to the scene of his former triumphs. Wernher von Braun, Hitler's rocket scientist, and Reinhard Gehlen, head of the OKW's Fremde Heere Ost (Foreign Armies East) intelligence section, and in later years to become chief of West German Intelligence, were also interrogated there. In August 1946 Otto Skorzeny, Hitler's top commando, was held in solitary at Oberursel while on his way to trial at Nuremburg. His Adjutant, Karl Radl, was also there, and one night was allowed to share his cell. Radl was to appear as a prosecution witness in Skorzeny's trial.

In October and November 1945, Killinger, Junge, Boehringer, Eberhardt and Bauer-Schlichtegroll were prosecuted by a British military court sitting at Wuppertal for overheating the cells and denying prisoners medical treatment. Killinger and Junge were found guilty and each sentenced to five years' imprisonment; Eberhardt was sentenced to three years; Boehringer and Bauer were acquitted. Although the victims of the heat-treatment had been bomber crews, no charges were brought against those interrogators from Oberursel's bomber branch.

During the Cold War, US intelligence used Camp King for much the same purpose as the Germans had during the 1939-45 war, for it was from here that radio messages from Eastern Germany were monitored and here that refugees from the East were debriefed. It was regarded as 'an oasis within Germany'. But as it was monitoring the East, Camp King was also under observation from the Stasi, the East German state security service, who had planted microphones there and listened in on conversations and interrogations.

In 1951, the American District Bureau was annulled, but Camp King continued as a US Army installation. Such was its influence that the US Army, rather than the local Bürgermeister, was the de facto town mayor. Camp King still played an important role in the educational, vocational and social life of the town. The children of American base-troops were educated at



By the 'fifties, many of the wooden buildings had been demolished including the East and West Blocks and half of the Middle Block of the original 1940 camp, and all of the cooler. Picture taken looking south-west in 1953. (SEWO)

the Frankfurt International School, situated in Waldlust between Hohemarkstrasse and Altkönigstrasse, and fetes, sporting events and prize-givings were held regularly at the camp.

In 1962, Camp King planned the hijacking of a MiG-21 of the East German Air Force, but the scheme was aborted when an aircraft inadvertently fell into Western hands. Camp King eventually became the HQ of the 4th US Army Transport Group. The cooler and the German officers mess were torn down and replaced with a transport pool, repair shop and gas station; the old transit camp was replaced with modern, multi-storey living quarters; the barracks previously used by German officers and the female staff were rebuilt in breeze-blocks and stucco. The supply hut, the old officers' quarters, the security offices and sergeants' quarters and all the sentry towers were demolished.

All that remained of the original Auswertestelle-West were the farmhouse the first prisoners had occupied in 1939, the cottage which the successive commandants had used as office and mess, the two cottages that had been part of the Kommandantur, the old guardhouse, and the long wooden administrative block. Most of the southernmost block was turned into a kitchen and dining room. 'The Shelter', once occupied by the Frankfurt Gestapo, was replaced by a cosy residential bungalow, and a modern housing estate was built around the southern perimeter of the camp at right-angles to Hohemarkstrasse. In September 1973, a fire in the camp caused DM 100,000 worth of damage, mostly to the dining room.

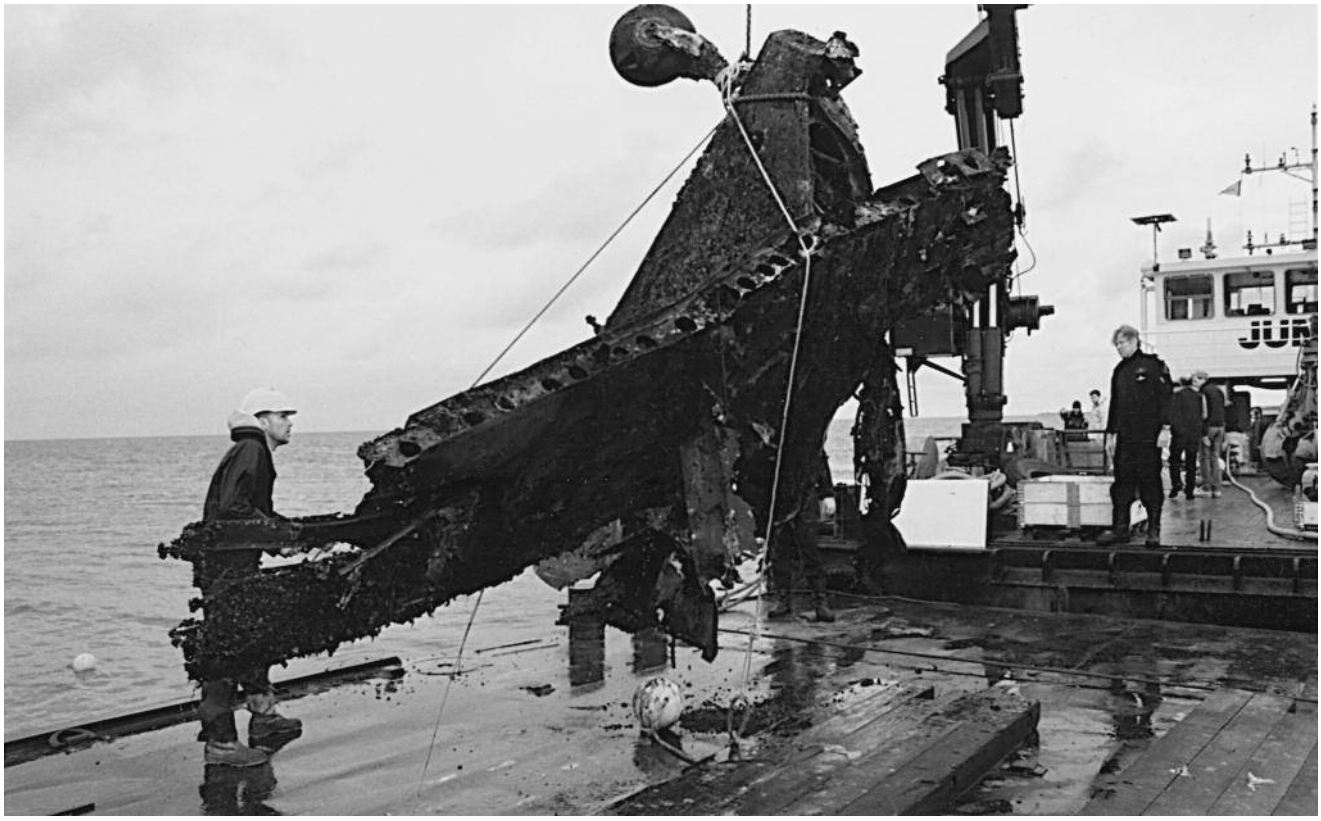
Camp King remained an air transport base until 1989. Its last two commanders were Colonel Jimmy D. Ross, from 1978 to January 1980, and Colonel James Howard Dunn, a Vietnam veteran, who oversaw the dismantling of the organisation and the withdrawal of its personnel. On April 1, 1995, the last US personnel moved out. The Americans stripped the camp of almost everything except electric wiring, telephone wall-jacks, light fixtures, showers, toilets, sinks, plumbing and wall and pipe insulation.

Negotiations took place to sell the site to Bonn, but these collapsed because the township of Oberursel wanted to keep the houses built on Hohemarkstrasse. Finally, on January 1, 1998, the camp was bought for DM 23.7 million by the town of Oberursel, with the intention of turning it into a housing development. The model cottages and other buildings of the former Siedlungshof have been declared protected buildings and will be preserved but the administrative block — the only wartime building to survive so long — and all the American-built blocks will be pulled down to make way for new housing. But running diagonally across the Siedlungsstrasse is a dip in the road exactly following the trajectory of Wing Commander Harry Day's tunnel that broke in 1941. No amount of filling-in could stop the soil from constantly compacting.

Above: **Camp King under US tenure — as seen from 'Mountain Lodge' (Stadtarchiv Oberursel).** *Below:* **Looking north-west with the US housing blocks along the Hohemarkstrasse in the foreground. (US Army)**

The author would like to acknowledge the help of Martin Ohm, his interpreter and guide during the research for this article; the Stadtarchiv at Oberursel; Isabel Frick for translating German documents; Squadron Leader David Kay, RAF (Retd.), for providing an early map of Dulag Luft; and to Raymond F. Tolliver for providing illustrations from his excellent book The Interrogator, *published by Schiffer Publishing Ltd.*

The entrance to Camp King at the point where the Siedlungsstrasse joins Hohemarkstrasse. The apartment blocks along Hohemarkstrasse are the only US-built structures that will survive the complete renovation of the site.



In July 1997, 53 years after it crashed into the waters of the IJsselmeer inland sea in the Netherlands, the wreckage of a Hudson Mk IIIA light bomber was lifted from the sea-bed. Since the war, the Dutch have recovered many aircraft wrecks from the IJsselmeer — the majority of them from land reclaimed from the sea (see *After the Battle* No. 12). What made this particular recovery stand out even more was the fact that the aircraft in question had been on a special secret mission, namely to drop four secret agents into occupied Holland. The agents, all of Dutch nationality, had been trained by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and sent out by its Dutch counterpart, the Bureau Bijzondere Opdrachten (BBO). The salvaging operation also solved the fate of the Hudson's pilot, the one member of the RAF crew whose body had never been found. (KM)

RECOVERY OF AN SOE HUDSON

By Karel Margry

On the night of July 5/6, 1944, a Lockheed Hudson Mk IIIA of No. 161 (Special Duties) Squadron took off from RAF Tempsford in Bedfordshire with the mission to drop four secret agents of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) into the occupied Netherlands. About an hour later, the Hudson crashed into the waters of the IJsselmeer inland sea, killing the four-man RAF crew and the four SOE agents, and putting an abrupt halt to the latter's planned missions. Wrapped, like all secret operations, in a veil of mystery, the story of these four Dutch agents is little known. Similarly, not all questions surrounding the last flight of Hudson FK790 could be solved after the war, the most important being the fate of the one missing member of the crew. The answer came only in 1997 when, 53 years after it disappeared under the water, the wreck of the aircraft was found and, in an operation involving the Dutch Navy, Air Force and Army, lifted from the sea-bed.

One of the most-important US aircraft purchased by Britain for use in World War II, the Lockheed Hudson was designed at short notice specifically to meet British requirements. During 1938, the British Purchasing Commission in America was seeking a light bomber aircraft for coastal reconnaissance and Lockheed rapidly produced a proposal based on its two-engined Model 14 civil transport. Britain placed an order for 250 of the Model 214s, as the military version was known, while it was still on the drawing board. The main difference with the civilian type was the addition of a large power-operated Boulton-Paul two-gun turret in the rear fuselage, and the mounting of two more .303 machine guns in the nose. The first Hudson, as the RAF named the type, flew on December 10, 1938, and deliveries to Britain began in February 1939, most Hudsons going to RAF Coastal Command. The Hudson III differed from earlier models in that it had more powerful 1200-hp engines, two additional beam gun positions and, after the first 150, additional fuel capacity. The Coastal Command Hudsons operated on offensive patrols well into 1943. Thereafter, many were modified to serve a transports. (IWM)

Pieter Kwint ('Fives'), trained to act as resistance circuit organiser.

Johannes Walter ('Bowls'), assigned to Kwint as his wireless operator.

THE MISSION

After the disaster of the so-called 'Englandspiel' spy and wireless game, which between March 1942 and September 1943 — through a combination of bad luck and unbelievable blunders and carelessness on the part of SOE — had led to the arrest by the Germans of 61 Dutch SOE agents, the capture of great quantities of air-dropped arms, and the penetration of almost every Dutch resistance organisation, the Allies had no choice but to make a complete break with their previous activity in Holland and start all over again from scratch. Recognising the need for a fresh start, the Dutch government-in-exile in London had dissolved the secret service organisations which had hitherto been SOE's Dutch counterpart and set up two new organisations: the Bureau Inlichtingen (BI) for espionage and intelligence operations (already set up in November 1942), and the Bureau Bijzondere Opdrachten (BBO) for sabotage operations and the training of resistance groups (set up in February 1944). Working in close co-operation with MI6, MI9 and SOE, these agencies embarked on rebuilding an agent network in the Netherlands. By the beginning of July 1944, BI had sent out 26 agents and BBO (which had only become operational in March) eight.

The four agents to be sent out in BBO's next mission were Pieter Kwint, Pleun Verhoef, Johannes Walter and Jan Bockma. As was usual in SOE missions, they would work in pairs made up of one agent/circuit organiser and one wireless operator. Kwint would team up with Walter, and Verhoef with Bockma. All four men were of Dutch nationality and in their early twenties; before they joined BBO, each had already been through many adventures.

Pieter Kwint was born on August 4, 1922 at Meppel. A student at Amsterdam University since 1941, when in March 1943 the German occupier demanded that all Dutch students sign a so-called 'declaration of loyalty' to Germany, Kwint had refused to sign. Instead, he went into hiding near Driebergen where he soon became deeply involved in underground work. Deciding to make his way to England, he had left on November 8, 1943, travelling under false papers to Paris and from there across the Pyrenees into Spain. Arrested by the Spanish police on November 19, he spent six weeks in a filthy and badly overcrowded prison at Figueras. On December 29, he and a group of fellow-prisoners — hand-cuffed in pairs and under heavy guard — left on a six-day train journey which, after overnight stops in prison cells at Barcelona, Reus and Saragossa, ended on January 3, 1944 in the internment camp for foreign nationals at Miranda de Ebro. Released on January 19 through intermediation of the Dutch consulate, Kwint and some 100 others were put on a train to Portugal where they boarded the ship *Onduna* for Britain. Arriving in Liverpool on March 16, he underwent the usual interrogation at the Royal Patriotic School in South London after which, because of his resistance record, he was asked to become a secret agent for BBO.

Like any SOE agent sent out to occupied Europe, Kwint would be known under at least four different names: firstly, his agent's training name (assigned to each agent when he first entered the SOE school); secondly, the code-name of his particular mission; then his so-called 'name in the field' — i.e. the Christian name to be used in his contacts with resistance people and fellow-agents in occupied territory; and finally the name on his (forged) identity papers. In the case of Pieter Kwint, his agent's training name was 'Pieter Krant', his mission name was 'Fives', he would be known in the field as 'Barend', and his identity card gave his name as 'Pieter Nijhof'.

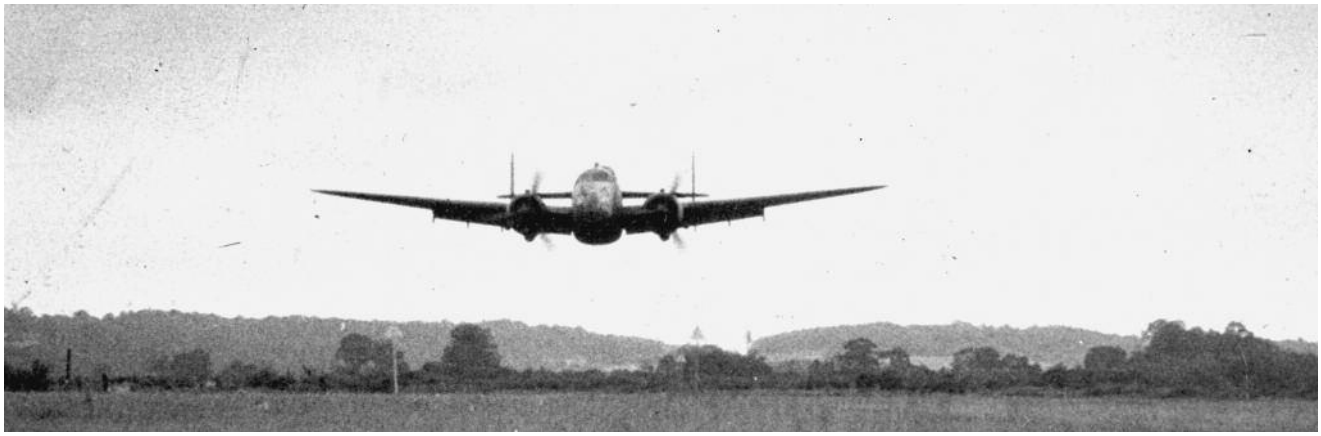
The second agent, Pleun Verhoef, was born on November 30, 1919 at Vianen. When the Germans invaded Holland in May 1940, Verhoef had been a private in the Dutch 6e Regiment Infanterie stationed near Breda. Caught up with others of his unit in the Allies' chaotic retreat through Belgium and France, he managed to be evacuated across the Channel to Britain. Assigned to the new Royal Dutch Brigade Prinses Irene in August 1941, he volunteered for that brigade's fledgling parachute company, gaining his parachute wings in April 1942. In October, he also completed a demolition course. On April 2, 1943, he left the brigade to begin training as an SOE agent. Owing to the unclear situation in Holland, he was not sent out in 1943, and became one of the first agents to be recruited by BBO in March 1944. Verhoef had been given the agent's training name of 'Pleun Vorstman'; his mission code-name was 'Racquets'; his name in the field 'Eitjes'; and his identity papers named him 'Pieter Vermaas'.

Of the two wireless operators, Johannes Walter was born on October 7, 1922 at Djombang on Java in the Dutch East Indies. The son of a mixed marriage, he had strong Asian looks. Having joined the Dutch Royal Navy on January 1, 1942, he was transferred for training to Britain, where he arrived on May 3. After training as a wireless operator at an RAF school in Blackpool, he was assigned to No. 320 (Dutch) Squadron. In June 1943, SOE asked him to join their organisation as a W/T operator. Like with Pleun Verhoef, his employment in the field was held back by the winding down of the Englandspiel, enabling BBO to take him over as one of their first W/T operators in March 1944. Walter had been given the agent's training name of 'Johannes Wees', his mission code-name was 'Bowls'; his name in the field 'Albertus'; and his false identity 'Johannes Kamp'. Of the four agents, he was the only one married. During his stay in England, he had married an English girl, who was pregnant with their first baby when he left for Holland.

The second operator, Jan Bockma, had been born on August 31, 1921 at IJlst in the north of the country, but his family had moved to Heerlen in the south when he was still young. His father being an important Resistance leader in the province of Zuid Limburg, the son had soon become involved in underground activities too. Wanting to join Allied forces in England, he had left Holland on May 16, 1942 — against the advice of his father, who judged his underground work in Holland more useful. He made his way to Vichy France where he enlisted in the Foreign Legion. At an opportune moment, he deserted and managed to board a Norwegian ship bound for Britain where he arrived on May 16, 1943 — exactly one year after he had left Holland. He served in the Dutch Royal Navy until early 1944 when BBO recruited him as one of their first wireless operators. Bockma was given the agent's training name of 'Jan Borel'; his mission code-name was 'Halma'; his name in the field 'Hubertus'; and his ID card gave his name as 'Jan Boersma'.

Pleun Verhoef ('Racquets'), the second circuit organiser.

Jan Bockma ('Halma'), Verhoef's wireless operator. (Portraits from SOE files).



A Hudson Mk I of No. 161 (Special Duties) Squadron makes a low pass over RAF Tempsford in 1943. No. 161 Squadron was formed in February 1942 by Wing Commander E. H. Fielden out of the King's Flight, King George VI's personal Hudson together with seven Lysanders forming its nucleus. By July 1944, the squadron had thirteen Lysanders and six Hudsons. Together with No. 138 Squadron (formed in August 1941), No. 161 had borne the whole burden of special operations until the autumn of 1943, by which time other squadrons joined them in their work. (IWM)

All four agents were sent out to contact and work for the Raad van Verzet (Council of Resistance — RVV), which was one of the main resistance networks in occupied Holland. Founded in April 1943, some of the RVV's cells had been penetrated in the past, but SOE and BBO correctly believed that its head executive was still sound. On April 1, 1944, BBO had sent out a first mission to the RVV tasked with communicating to them the Allied Commanders' directive for future action. The RVV, being very security-minded, had refused to receive these agents until they had satisfied themselves of their bona fides. When they were eventually received, it was too late because the agents had in the meantime contacted several other organisations, had become known to German counter-intelligence, and all been arrested between May 17 and 20. The RVV had reported their capture and asked for new men to be sent.

The primary task of the two agent-organisers, Kwint and Verhoef, was to act as saboteur-instructor or reception committee leader, depending on the RVV's immediate requirements. In addition, they were to deliver to the RVV a large amount of money — 50,000 guilders (approximately £5,000 but worth over £100,000 in today's value) — which the organisation could use to finance its operations. Kwint and Verhoef would each carry half of this sum — 25,000 guilders in banknotes of 100 — on their body camouflaged in a wash-leather money belt. The man to whom they were to hand over this money would identify himself by asking for 50,001 guilders — the extra guilder being a check that the money was going to the right person.

For the reception committees (for the dropping of arms or the delivery of other agents), Kwint and Verhoef were only to recruit people in whom they had complete trust and make sure that, should one of them be arrested, he or she could not compromise the position of others. Once a committee had been formed, the agents themselves were not to attend any of their meetings unless absolutely necessary. Their task was to advise London when the committee would be ready to start work, how many containers it could handle safely at one time, and to suggest at least two suitable dropping points.

Verhoef had been given one additional task. He had been trained in the use of the Eureka, a portable radio beacon for guiding aircraft. Two Eurekas would be dropped to the RVV separately at the 'Bertus' reception ground near Nijkerk on the Veluwe. Verhoef was to claim these sets from the RVV, and put them in operation at pin-points, the coordinates of which he would receive after he had notified London that he was in possession of the sets. The Eurekas were to facilitate RAF dropping operations in Holland and bomber operations in Germany. Verhoef was given a list of code signals for each set, and code messages broadcast by the BBC would indicate when London wanted the Eurekas to operate. As he himself would not have time to operate the sets throughout whole moon periods, Verhoef was to select and train two RVV men who would do nothing else but operate the Eurekas.

Kwint and Verhoef were given strict instructions not to overburden their W/T operators with too many or too long messages. Since their mission was sabotage and not intelligence, they were not to pass on espionage reports or other intelligence matter unless asked to do so by London. They were not to send their messages direct to their operator, but give them to the RVV who would then pass them on. They were to do all the encoding and decoding of their messages themselves, never show their codes to anyone else, always destroy that part of their One-Time Pad already used, and keep no records of messages exchanged. On the first, second and third days and the two Sundays following their arrival, the BBC would broadcast a message known to them — this would serve to prove their bona fides to their Dutch contacts.

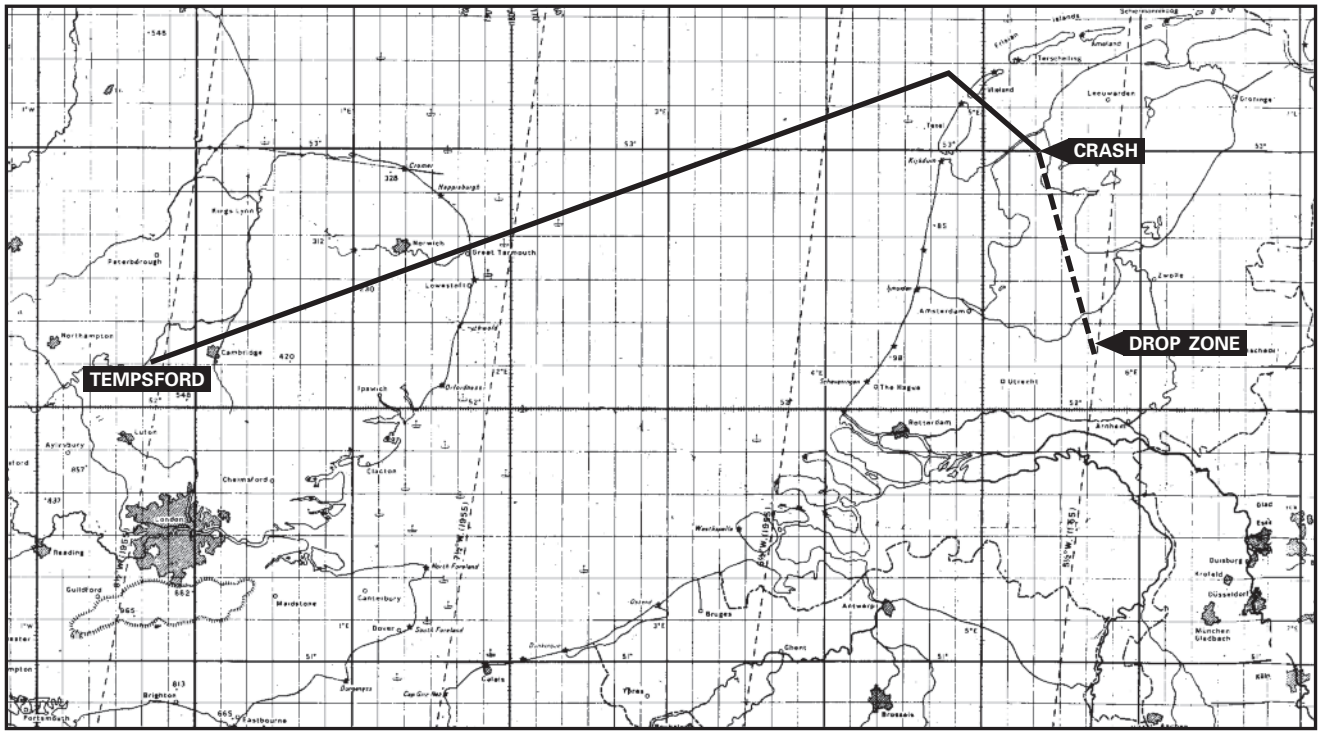
The two wireless operators, Walter and Bockma, would each jump with a W/T transmitter in a small leather suitcase, and three sets of One-Time Pad codes: one for themselves, one for the RVV and one spare. Their sole mission was to act as radio link between the RVV sabotage organisation and London. The RVV was not to involve them in any of their other activities, and use only the special code on the One-Time Pad which Walter and Bockma would give them and teach them how to use. Up to that time, the RVV had communicated with London through a separate organisation called the Radiodienst (Radio Service), but Walter and Bockma were to inform the RVV that all messages relating to armed resistance and sabotage must from now on come through their channels. The RVV was to arrange for houses from which they could safely transmit, and the operators were to change these as frequently as possible. The extra W/T plan and code given to them was for use by a new operator: if they or the RVV could find a man who was considered absolutely trustworthy, they could train him and advise London when he was ready to operate.

All four agents were instructed to always observe the security instructions given to them by the RVV and under no circumstances disclose to anyone other than their contact person that they had come from Britain. They were not to make contact with other organisations or persons unless this was arranged by the RVV. The men who had gone to Holland on April 1 had made all these mistakes, hence their arrest. For their

The crew of Hudson FK790:

Flight Lieutenant John Menzies, pilot.

Flying Officer Kenneth Bunney, navigator.



The planned flying route of FK790 on the night of July 5/6. As was common practice for aircraft wanting to keep their flying time over enemy-occupied territory as short as possible, the crew flew north-east across the Channel as far as the Wadden Islands, then made a right hook in order to continue over the waters of the IJsselmeer (the former Zuider Zee). Hitting Dutch mainland just north of Nijkerk, this would leave a mere four miles to the agents' drop-zone at Appelsche Heide. However, shortly after making its inland turn, the aircraft was shot down and crashed into the IJsselmeer.

part, the agents were to insist that the RVV arrange for their safe houses, and that they organise their sabotage organisation in such a way that it would never clash with or compromise their other activities.

All four agents carried with them 5,000 Dutch guilders for their personal use, plus 2,500 Belgian francs and 2,500 French francs for use in case of emergency. Of this, they had 150 guilders in small money in their pockets, the rest was camouflaged in their money belt. As personal baggage, all agents carried a brown paper parcel, except Bockma who would have a brown leather briefcase (this would also contain Hfl. 4,500 of his Dutch money). Kwint and Verhoef in addition jumped with a carrier pigeon which they could use to notify London of a safe landing. In each of the wireless suitcases was a silent .32 pistol with 50 rounds of ammunition, which the operator was to pass to his agent partner as soon as convenient.

The four agents would be dropped on the first favourable night in the July moon period. Their drop zone would be the Appelsche Heide, an expanse of heath between Nijkerk and Voorthuizen in the centre of the country. (Although several published accounts say that the dropping point was near the village of Exmorra in the northern province of Friesland, the original annex to the agents' orders clearly states their dropping point as the Appelsche Heide.) Immediately upon landing, they were to bury or destroy their parachute, jumpsuit overall and jump helmet. The two suitcases containing the wireless equipment were to be buried separately in such a way that a third person would be able to find them in case it was unsafe for the agents themselves to retrieve them. The men were then to proceed to their first contact address, the Van der Zalm farm on the grounds of the Landbouw-School (Agricultural School) which was about one kilometre from their dropping point. Their password would be 'Ik kom voor de volkstelling 1945' (I come for the census of 1945). From there, the RVV was to take each man to a separate safe house. After that, they were never to communicate with each other, unless via a 'cut-out' (intermediate persons who did not know each other). Once settled in, each agent was then to go to his personal contact address given in his orders, and the person there would put him in touch with the heads of the RVV.

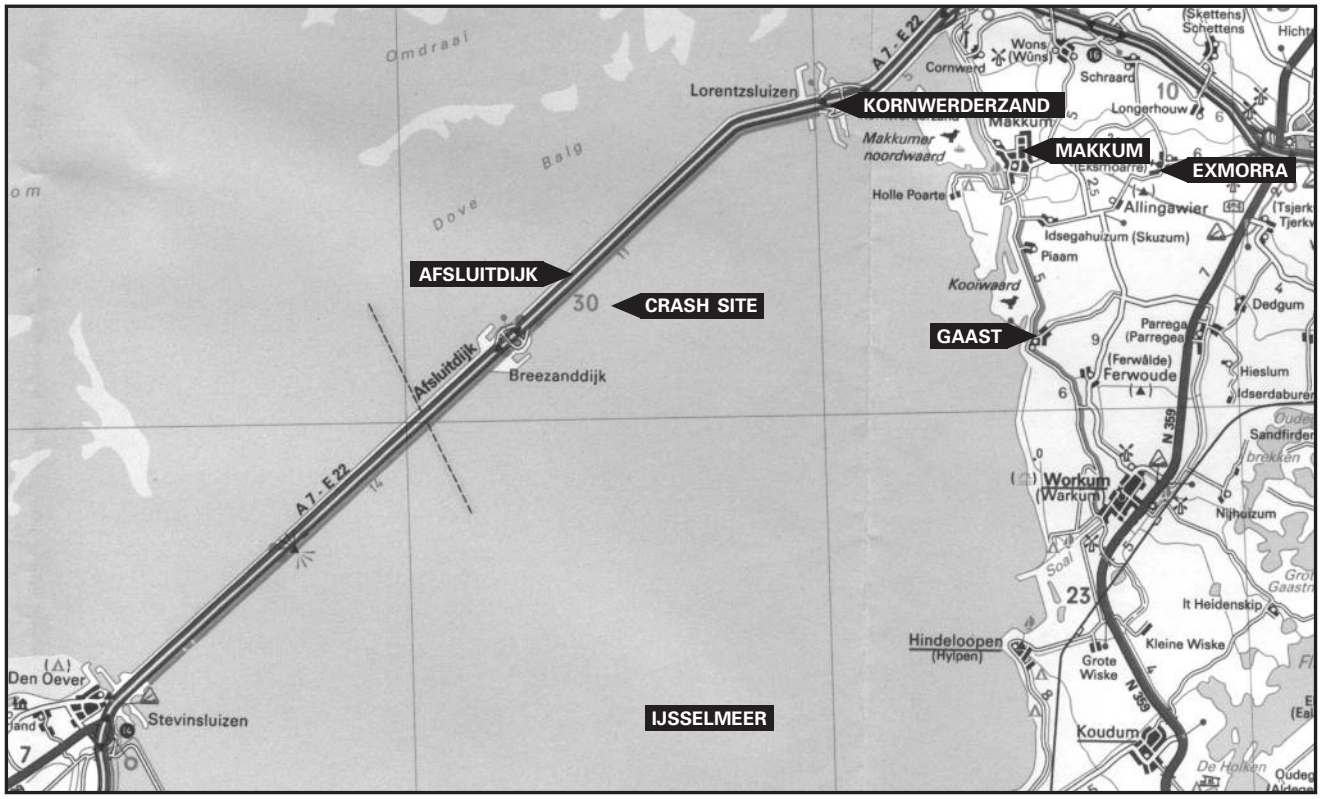
The first favourable moon night came on July 5/6. That night, four Hudson aircraft stood ready at RAF Tempsford, for in addition to the mission to Appelsche Heide, there would be three other secret missions to Holland going out. One would drop another BBO party of three men near Epe on the Veluwe, one would drop two BI agents near Laren in Gelderland, and the third was to drop one SOE agent near Roosendaal (the latter aircraft would run into bad weather and compass problems and return prematurely).

Kwint, Verhoef, Walter and Bockma would fly in Hudson FK790 (MA-R), the crew of which consisted of Flight Lieutenant John W. Menzies (pilot), Flying Officer Kenneth R. Bunney (navigator), Sergeant Dennis J. Withers (wireless operator) and Sergeant Eric M. Eliot (air gunner). Menzies was an experienced pilot, having completed 30 bombing missions with No. 101 Squadron, followed by stints of target-towing, ferry and air-sea rescue flying, before joining No. 161 (Special Duties) Squadron.

The last to depart, Hudson FK790 took off at 2350 hours. The plan was to take a north-easterly course towards the Frisian Wadden Islands, then turn south-east to come in between the islands of Texel and Vlieland, thus ensuring that most of the route to the dropping point would be over the relatively

Sergeant Dennis Withers, radio operator.

Sergeant Eric Eliot, air gunner. (R. Body)



The aircraft came down just beyond the Afsluitdijk causeway which closes off the IJsselmeer from the North Sea. After the crash, the bodies of all but two of the aircraft's occupants were recovered. Air gunner Eliot washed ashore at Gaast on July 12. So did radio operator Withers near Makkum on the 15th, and navigator Bunney near Kornwerderzand on the 26th. Three of the four agents were found floating in the water by fishermen: Johannes Walter on the 14th, Pieter Kwint the following day, and Jan Bockma on the 24th.

safe waters of the IJsselmeer.

Although the exact circumstances are unclear, it is certain that somewhere over the Wadden islands the aircraft was hit — either by Flak or, more likely, by a German night-fighter. Whatever the cause, the Hudson caught fire, and fell into the IJsselmeer, some 400 metres beyond the Afsluitdijk (the 30-kilometre-long causeway which separates the former Zuider Zee from the North Sea) at a point some four kilometres south-west of the causeway fortress of Kornwerderzand, where it sank in seven metres of water.

Between July 12-26, the bodies of six of the eight occupants of the Hudson were either washed ashore or found in the water. (As it happened, the three RAF crewmen all washed ashore whereas the three agents were all found floating.) First to be found of the aircrew, near Gaast on the 12th, was Sergeant Eliot, the air gunner. Sergeant Withers, the wireless operator, was found near Makkum on July 15, and Flying Officer Bunney, the navigator, on July 26 near Kornwerderzand. All three were buried at Makkum General Cemetery in Row O, Graves 32, 34 and 38 respectively.

The first agent to be found was Johannes Walter. On July 14, around noon, fisherman Eelke van der Laan from Makkum found a body floating in the IJsselmeer near Kornwerderzand. Brought to Makkum, the corpse was investigated aboard the fishing boat by the commander of the local Dutch police post, Hoofdwachtmeester der Marechaussee Andries Kuipers, who established that the dead man wore an English-made aircrew overall, with a brown civilian suit underneath. Kuipers ordered the corpse, which was in a state of advanced decomposition, to be put in the mortuary of the Makkum General Cemetery. Next morning (July 15), a German military doctor came to Makkum to carry out a further examination of the corpse. Present at the inquest were Hoofdwachtmeester Kuipers and his colleague, Opperwachtmeester Abele Scheepvaart (who was deeply involved in resistance work, and had already realised that the dead man was a secret agent). In the inside pocket of the civilian suit, the German doctor found a Dutch identity card naming the dead man as Johannes Albertus Kamp, born October 7, 1922, at Djombang, Java, Dutch East Indies. The man had a bullet wound in the head, and this was put down as the cause of death. Because of the aircrew uniform, and because he could find no indication of rank on it, the German doctor concluded that the man must have been a trainee flyer in the Royal Air Force. Scheepvaart knew better but said nothing. After the post-mortem, Johannes Walter was buried in the General Cemetery in Grave O-33.

That same day (July 15), Pieter Kwint was

Right: **All three drowned agents were brought ashore to Makkum where the Germans conducted post-mortem investigations on them. Only at the third, that of Jan Bockma, did the Germans discover that the dead men were all in fact secret agents. The post-mortems were carried out in this small room inside the old Makkum church, which was then in use as the cemetery mortuary.**

Opperwachtmeester der Marechaussee Abele Scheepvaart who was present at the German post-mortem inquests of the agents' corpses, and later passed a report of these to the Dutch resistance.

The three British airmen were buried at Makkum Churchyard, where they still lie today. Their graves were relocated when the Commonwealth War Graves Commission created a separate plot after the war.

found. Around noon, fisherman Andries Koornstra from Makkum discovered a dead body dressed in flying clothes floating in the water. The same routine unrolled. Brought ashore, the corpse was investigated by Opperwachtmeester Scheepvaart and put in the mortuary awaiting further post-mortem by the German doctor. This took place on July 17, again in the presence of Scheepvaart and Kuipers. Again, the body was found to wear a civilian suit under the flying overall. Papers found on him named the man as Pieter Nijhof, born June 29, 1920, at Amsterdam. Again, because of the absence of any rank indications, the doctor's verdict was that he must have been an RAF flyer undergoing training. As there were no visible injuries, it was assumed the man had drowned. That evening, Pieter Kwint was buried next to Walter in Grave O-35.

A week elapsed before the next agent, Jan Bockma, was found. On July 24, fisherman Jan Bootsma spotted a body in flying clothes floating off Kornwerderzand. The dead man was in fact still linked to the drowned aircraft by the static line of his parachute, and he had a brown briefcase tied to him with a scarf. Bootsma freed the corpse and brought it back to Makkum, where Scheepvaart and Kuipers duly reported the new find to the German authorities. The post-mortem in the mortuary was carried out that same evening, however this time not by the military doctor who had done the previous two, but by an expert of the Sicherheitsdienst (German Security Service — SD) from Leeuwarden. He proved to be much more suspicious. Finding civilian clothes underneath the flying overall, he proceeded to strip the body naked, taking all clothing and equipment with him for further examination. Next morning (July 25) the as yet unnamed man was buried in the General Cemetery in Grave O-37.

Although the Sicherheitsdienst notified the Makkum police on July 31 that they had found no clue as to the dead man's identity, in actual fact they must have found Bockma's false identity card (for it is known that they knew his alias, Jan Boersma). The lie was probably only to hide the fact that they had discovered that he was a secret agent — either from finding his camouflaged money belt or from material contained in the briefcase.

Realising that the other two men found with civilian clothes under their flying suit were probably also secret agents, the Sicherheitsdienst returned to Makkum and dug up the bodies of all three men. Cutting open the clothing with sharp knives, they discovered the money belts. In that of Kwint, they found the 25,000 guilders. In Walter's belt, and much more important to them, they found a small tightly-soldered tin which contained his radio frequency crystals, code and W/T plan. Delighted with their finds, the SD men took pictures of the three men, and put the agents' clothing in sacks to be taken away for further examination. Seeing that curious civilians were watching the procedure, one of the Germans drew a pistol and fired over their heads, chasing them away.

By now, the Sicherheitsdienst knew that there were still two persons missing from the aircraft, and therefore they made arrangements for the plane to be lifted and examined.

Meanwhile, back in England, there was great anxiety. When the Hudson did not return from its mission, it was clear that something had gone wrong, but of course nobody at SOE or BBO could tell what. One could assume that the aircraft had crashed, but was this before or after the agents had jumped? If before, had any of the occupants survived? Had they been able to make good their escape or been captured? What about their secret codes and radio sets? Nobody could tell. The fact that neither of the pigeons that were to report the agents' safe landing arrived back in England was certainly a bad sign. To be on the safe side, all four agents were presumed to be dead.

Then on July 28, three weeks after the agents' departure, SOE received a radio message which made use of 'Bowls's (Walter's) code and W/T plan, purporting to be sent clandestinely by an anti-Nazi who had been forced to help the Gestapo in their counter-espionage work. The message read:

'Have been for over 15 years in Argentina and USA. Was pressed into service with the Gestapo at war begin while visiting Germany and among others got to be entrusted with translating your agents' materials, registering and filing picked up agents' sending sets. Have since learned sigs in gabithavildu *[sic]*. Been looking for a contact chance as I got utmostly disgusted with this damned Hitlerism and life amongst these idiots. Have just been translating material from three of your agents who were found drowned on July 14 at Makkum. Am considered stupid enough to be harmless. Shall show them. Want to help and work with you. Give me a chance please. I shall prove my sincerity. What must you know about me to prove myself. Shall come back thirty first at prescribed time and await your answer then.'

No security checks were used in this message. Although SOE thought the chance of the man proving genuine very small, it was decided to play along. On July 30, they asked him to supply his full name, date of birth and dates of his residence in Argentina and the USA, the names of the three drowned agents, the number of the set he was using, and details of arrested agents sent from England in the last six months.

'Bowls' replied two days later (August 1), giving his name as Johann Blanke, born on July 20, 1904, in Leipzig, Germany, and stating he had worked in Buenos Aires from 1922 to 1926 and in New York from 1926 to 1938. The dead agents were Pieter Nijhof, Johannes Kamp and Jan Boersma. Crystals but no sets had been found. Could it be arranged for him to send and receive between 1300 and 1500 hours every second or third day as this would be more convenient? Two days later (August 3), the man

The three SOE agents were buried at the same cemetery. Today, only the grave of Johannes Walter remains, the others having been re-interred in their home towns after the war.

Pieter Kwint now lies at the Municipal Cemetery at Meppel.

Jan Bockma's grave is at the General Cemetery at Heerlen.

Pleun Verhoef, whose body was not found until November 1945, rests at Vianen.

reported the names of six agents who had been arrested since February (including that of one of the BBO agents sent out on April 1 to the RVV). He added that it was extremely dangerous for him to continue using his present set and code, and asked whether there was any chance of obtaining another set, code, transmission plan and poem.

London replied the following day, thanking him for the names of the arrested men but adding that the list was not complete and that, in order to gain their confidence, he should give particulars or code-names of wireless sets working with London and which were known to be in Gestapo hands. His dangerous position was appreciated and he should keep his transmissions to a minimum. When London was satisfied, a scheme would be worked out for delivering new materials.

Although SOE continued to regard this wireless link with Holland with great suspicion, on August 11 a decision was made to keep it open, as the man's cables might yield useful information. The radio game continued for another six months, until February 8, 1945, when SOE sent a cable breaking off the contact. (After the war, it was confirmed that the German Sicherheitsdienst had been behind the 'Bowls' transmissions. The man responsible for it was SS-Oberscharführer Otto Houbrok, who had run the game under the code-name 'Saskiaspiel'. Johann Blanke really existed: he was an SS-Scharführer on the SD staff in The Hague.)

Even though they were suspect, the messages from 'Johann Blanke' of July 28 and August 1 gave SOE the first indication of the fate of Hudson FK790. Confirmation came that same week through a cable from another agent, Bert de Goede ('Rummy') — a member of the other BBO party that had left Tempsford on the same night as the ill-fated Hudson and had made a successful jump — who reported that the aircraft had indeed crashed and its occupants drowned.

A fuller report reached London as well. From information supplied by Abele Scheepvaart, the Dutch Underground compiled a report on the Allied airmen found in the IJsselmeer, which listed the three RAF flyers and gave details from the post-mortem inquest of 'Kamp' (Walter), 'Nijhof' (Kwint) and the unidentified third man (Bockma). This report, dated October 15, 1944, reached London some time later.

The body of the fourth agent, Pleun Verhoef, was not found until after the war. On November 21, 1945, a part of the Hudson was salvaged from the water, and his remains were found in the wreckage. The body of the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Menzies, was not found and he remained listed as missing.

After the war, Pieter Kwint was re-interred at Meppel, and Jan Bockma at Heerlen. Pleun Verhoef was buried in Vianen on December 21, 1945. Johannes Walter still rests in Makkum.

THE RECOVERY

For nearly 53 years, the case of Hudson FK790 remained as good as closed. Then, in the summer of 1997, a Dutch aircraft research and recovery group, the Stichting Onderzoek Vermiste Oorlogsslachtoffers (Missing War Victims Investigation Foundation — OVMO) located the wreckage in the IJsselmeer.

Although it was generally believed that the whole of the aircraft had been salvaged in 1945, the OVMO had long had information that in fact only a small part had been lifted and that the main wreckage still lay on the sea-bed somewhere. Back in the 1950s, when fishing on the IJsselmeer was still allowed, fishermen had already caught their nets in some wreckage in the northern corner of the inland see, and had learned to avoid the spot. The OVMO was aware of these stories, and from their own research knew that no other aircraft than the SOE Hudson had crashed in that area, although they did not know the precise location. It was a tip by fisherman Fimme Bootsma from Makkum (the son of the fisherman who had found agent Jan Bockma's corpse in 1944), who remembered his father's tales about the incident and knew the location himself, which finally led them to the correct spot.

The search began in earnest when sports diver Winfried Walta of the Miramar Diving Club from Leeuwarden contacted the OVMO chairman, Wijnand Baerken, about the wreck. On Saturday July 5, Miramar and the OVMO went out in two boats hoping to find the aircraft. They had two pieces of equipment to help them with their search: an earth scan and a magnetometer. At first they were unsuccessful but, as luck had it, Fimme Bootsma was out with his fishing boat, and he quickly led them to the right spot. Here, both the earth scan and the magnetometer confirmed the presence of an aircraft wreck beneath the waves at 53°02'6902N 05°15'7294E.

At that point, the OVMO had to return to shore because of a leak in their boat, but Miramar stayed to make a first dive on the wreck. That afternoon, one of them brought up a piece of wireless equipment. It had not been timed as such on purpose, but it was exactly 53 years to the day after Hudson FK790 had crashed.

Since the official records indicated that FK790 had already been recovered back in 1945, the OVMO wanted to make absolutely sure that the wreckage they had found was indeed that of the SOE Hudson, the more so since they knew that the remains of the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Menzies, were then very likely to be still inside. A first confirmation came when OVMO's Piet Appelman, who is an expert radio ham, identified the wireless as part of a B2 (3 Mark II) set of the type used by SOE agents.

On Thursday, July 10, the OVMO and Miramar returned for a second exploration of the wreck, Baerken (a professional diver himself) now taking part in the dive. Nothing of substance was brought up, but the divers reported the aircraft half buried in sand and great quantities of ammunition lying around it.

The OVMO is an aircraft recovery group which prides itself on doing things according to the book and on its good co-operation with the authorities, so the following day, July 11, Baerken telephoned Rijkswaterstaat (the State Water Authority — RWS) and the municipality of Wonseradeel (Wûnseradiel), informing them about the aircraft find and reporting the presence of a large amount of ammunition, TNT explosives, and possibly bombs, and the likelihood that one member of the crew was still in the wreck. The deputy-mayor of Wonseradeel, Gerrit Draaijer, not wanting to take any risk, notified the Kustwacht (Dutch Police Coast Guard) who in turn informed the Royal Dutch Navy. A hectic series of phone calls and faxes between the various authorities involved led to a decision that the first priority should be the removal of any live ordnance by the Navy's Mijnendienst (Mine Counter-Measures Service).

Early on Saturday, July 12, Rijkswaterstaat motor boat *Elise* — with RWS environmental inspector Pieter Wagemakers and OVMO secretary Martijn Bannink aboard — sailed from Breezanddijk to the crash site to begin a sonar search of the sea-bed. At 1250 hours, salvage ship HMS *Cerberus* arrived at the crash site from the Navy port of Den Helder, with a team of divers from the Navy's Duik- en Demonteergroep (Diving and Dismantling Group — DDG) aboard. At 1330 hours, they began work and soon the first belts of .303 machine-gun ammunition were brought to the surface. The further search concentrated on a case of ammo which the Miramar divers had reported after their first dive.

Meanwhile, the Bergingsdienst (Salvage Service) of the Royal Netherlands Air Force — the agency charged with salvaging military aircraft in the Netherlands — had been alerted too. Arriving that afternoon, Adjudant Henny Teunissen explained the likelihood that the Hudson, in addition to the four agents, had also carried containers of arms and ammunition for dropping to the Resistance, and that therefore the amount of explosive ordnance in the wreck might be considerable. He advised to contact the British military attaché in The Hague to see whether he could find out more precise details of the aircraft's load.

At the end of that first day, an accident occurred when the outboard engine of one

July 1997, and recovery vessels *Jumbo* and *Cerberus* are in place ready to lift the crashed Hudson from the bottom of the IJsselmeer. Immediately after it was rediscovered, the Dutch authorities decided to mount an operation to raise the aircraft, both because of the danger of possible live ordnance and the suspected presence of the remains of the pilot in the wreck. Expert branches of the Dutch Navy, Air Force and Army were all involved. By July 18, everything was ready. (H. Tennissen)

of the DDG rubber boats accidentally started throwing two divers overboard and wounding three, one them seriously. The injured men were taken to Breezanddijk and from there to a hospital in Den Helder. While the *Elise* returned to harbour for the night, the *Cerberus* stayed in position at anchor.

Next day, Sunday July 13, diving was resumed, but no more ammunition was found, and at noon all ships returned to port. By now, the crash site had been declared a restricted area and a square kilometre around the wreck been cordoned off with buoys.

At further meetings on Monday and Tuesday between all parties concerned, a decision was taken to salvage the wreck. The Air Force's Bergingsdienst would have overall direction of the operation, but the job of actually lifting the aircraft was given to the civilian salvaging company BTS from Lelystad; the Navy's Mijnendienst would handle all the ammunition and explosives found; and the Army's Gravendienst (Grave Service) would be called in if any human remains were discovered. As the crash position lay astride the main shipping route to the Kornwerderzand sluices, Rijkswaterstaat would stand by to direct shipping traffic.

On Wednesday (July 16), the *Elise* returned to the crash position with a diver from BTS, Herman van Vugt, to carry out a survey of the wreck in order to determine the best way of salvaging it. On arrival, they found that someone had marked the position with a small floating flag — evidence that clandestine diving had probably taken place. This was confirmed when diver Van Vugt found a wireless set and oxygen equipment beside the wreck — items which had not been there before. To prevent more illegal diving, the Navy put a tighter security around the position. Van Vugt reported that the wreck consisted of a mangled composition of rusted scrap, partly buried in the sand, and he precluded any possibility of it being recovered in one piece. As if to prove it, at 1005, he brought up a first small piece of the fuselage. It was decided that the best salvage method would be to put a pincer-shovel crane with an extra-long arm on a floating pontoon. This could then scoop up the seabed, hopefully bringing up intact portions of the aircraft, after which the sand deposited on the pontoon would be searched for smaller bits. The crane would start at the rear end of the aircraft and from there work its way forward to the cockpit.

By far the biggest part brought up that first day was the rear fuselage, complete with tail wings and landing wheel. (KM)

Preparations for the recovery began on Thursday July 17. The position of the wreck was marked with buoys to facilitate exact mooring of the salvage vessels. Meanwhile, two BTS divers operating from the *Elise* recovered small aircraft parts and, at 1600 hours, a batch of 450 machine-gun rounds. At 1630, BTS's multi-purpose recovery vessel *Jumbo*, pushing a large floating pontoon on which stood the long-armed crane, arrived and moored beside the position.

Right: **Still visible after all these years in the water was the aircraft's serial number below the tailplane: FK790 (KM)**

The main operation began on Friday, July 18. At 0810 hours, the *Cerberus* arrived with the DDG divers. A first hitch occurred when it was found that the shovel crane, when its scoop was filled, was unable to lift it. A decision was quickly made to obtain another crane from shore, but meanwhile the recovery would proceed using the smaller crane on the *Jumbo*. At 0935, a major part of the rear fuselage, complete with tailplane and landing gear, was brought up, followed minutes later by one of the three-bladed propellers. The stencilled serial number FK790 on the fuselage, faded after 53 years in the water but still visible, ascertained that this was indeed the SOE Hudson lost on the night of July 5/6, 1944. A 2cm shell hole in one of the propeller blades gave clear confirmation that the aircraft had

The crane of the *Jumbo* brings up one of the Hudson's propellers. (H. Tennissen)

been shot down, not crashed owing to some mechanical malfunction.

Over the next two hours, parts of one of the Wright-Cyclone engines were recovered, followed by a piece of wing and part of a supply-dropping parachute. Meanwhile, BTS had managed to repair the pontoon crane and, at 1330, it began work, scooping up sand and aircraft parts onto the *Jumbo*. Items brought up included another 100 rounds of small-calibre ammunition, part of a main wing with landing wheel and undercarriage, and fuselage skin.

At 1600 hours, there was an emotional moment when the *Elise* brought Annie Meijer-Bockma (67), sister of secret agent Jan Bockma, to the pontoon. Mrs Meijer — who today lives at Hardegarijp near Leeuwarden, just 30 miles as the crow flies from the crash site — was accompanied by deputy-mayor Draaijer of Wonseradeel; Luitenant-ter-Zee 1e Klas Gerrit Boonen, head of Navy Diving and Demolition Affairs; Wijnand Baerken and Martijn Bannink of the OVMO, and two newspaper reporters. In a short ceremony, Mrs Meijer placed a wreath in memory of her brother and the others who had died in the crash. Adjudant Teunissen, the salvage leader, presented her with two

Later in the day, the pincer-shovel crane with the extra-long arm — repaired after its initial breakdown — joined in. Moored on the left is the Navy recovery vessel HMS *Cerberus*. Visible on the horizon is the Afsluitdijk causeway. (KM)

pieces from the aircraft, a fragment of the gun turret and a door latch.

Although the salvage operation attracted great attention from the press, for safety reasons no other reporters or television news teams were allowed on any of the salvage vessels. However, permission was given for their boats to cover the operation from outside the buoyed area.

The recovery continued over the next four days, July 19-22. Items scooped up by the crane on Sunday included another piece of tail, one of the aircraft's .303-calibre machine guns (serial number BY 45155), a Very pistol and signal ammunition, a fire-extinguisher,

Left: **Each scoopful of sand is meticulously searched for bits and pieces of the aircraft, which are then collected in the wooden crates on the right. (KM)**

Right: **Adjutant Henny Teunissen of the RNAF Bergingsdienst, the salvage project leader, presents Annie Meijer-Bockma, the sister of secret agent Jan Bockma, with a part from the aircraft. (KM)**

map-reading lamp, flashlight, hand compass, blocks of a mouldable yellow substance (assumed to be plastic explosive), some 10 sticks of dynamite, pieces of leather shoes, and an oxygen mask. By Sunday afternoon, the shovel had reached the cockpit area, where remains of the missing pilot were expected. Soon, numerous human bones were found and by the time the operation was finished, 80 per cent of the skeleton had been recovered, including an intact set of teeth. The latter would later help to confirm the dead man's identity as that of the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Menzies. Personal items found in the cockpit area included a pocket-watch, a wrist-watch and a cufflinks.

On Monday (July 20), a DDG diver filmed the sea-bed with an underwater camera, after which a BTS diver searched the area worked over by the cranes the day before. Prominent among the items recovered that day were a second machine gun (serial number BY 62656), a rubber dinghy, another parachute, a crash-hatchet, a wallet containing a magnifying glass, a radio crystal, a comb and a glove.

On Tuesday (July 21), three experts from the Army's Gravendienst arrived to examine the human remains found. During the morning, the assembled press was given an opportunity to view the operation from close by. Picked up from Breezanddijk by RWS survey boat *Heffesant,* they were moored alongside the salvage vessels (with strict instruction not to board any of them) and given a briefing by Adjudant Teunissen and Luitenant-ter-Zee Boonen. Artifacts recovered that day included the earphones from a flying helmet, a black-out lamp, and another hand compass.

On Wednesday (July 22), the only thing found, by a diver, was another part of a main wing. By then, the crane was bringing up nothing but clean sand, and at 1100 hours the operation was closed down. Buoys were lifted, and the *Jumbo* left for Urk to unload the aircraft remains. From there, lorries would take everything to the Bergingsdienst base at Woensdrecht — everything except the propeller which, it had been decided, would be set up as a memorial at Exmorra.

The operation had been a complete success. All that remained of the Hudson had been lifted and the remains of what was almost certainly the one missing member of the crew recovered. Although some explosives had been found, there had been no sign of any supply containers filled with arms and ammunition, and in the end the ordnance harvest was much lower than had been expected and feared beforehand. In financial terms, the whole operation had cost some 250,000 guilders (about £78,000), 120,000 of which was to be paid by the municipality of

Two of the .303-calibre machine guns were recovered. One gun was found to have a round in its chamber, which was carefully removed by one of the Royal Dutch Navy ordnance experts. (H. Tennissen)

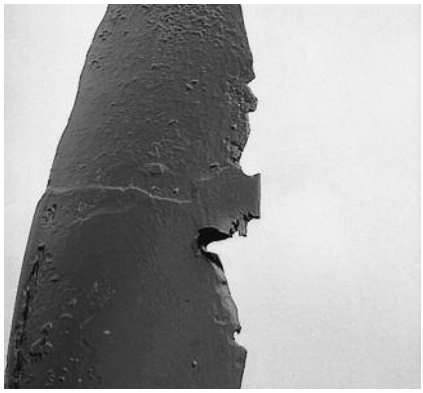
Ordnance recovered from the wreck included sticks of dynamite and blocks of plastic explosive issued to the secret agents.

Found on the fourth day of the salvage operation was this almost intact parachute. (H. Tennissen)

Above: **On May 13, 1998, a memorial incorporating the Hudson's propeller was unveiled at Exmorra, a small village three miles inland from Makkum, where in the last months of the war there had been a field (code-name 'Washstand') for arms drops to the Dutch resistance.** *Right:* **Relatives of the crew and agents place wreaths at the memorial. (T. Gietema)** *Centre:* **A plaque nearby explains the story of Hudson FK790. Actually, the decision to place the memorial at Exmorra was based on a mistake, namely the assumption that this was where the four BBO agents were to have dropped if their plane had not crashed. This despite the fact that former members of this field's wartime reception committee could not recall ever having received any message that agents would be dropped on their field. This is not surprising as in actual fact the FK790's target was a DZ on the Appelsche Heide, nearly 60 miles further to the south-east.**

Wonseradeel and the remainder by the Dutch Exchequer.

The Hudson propeller was unveiled at Exmorra (where there had been a dropping field for arms drops in 1944-45) on May 13, 1998. The ceremony was attended by relatives of agents Kwint, Verhoef and Bockma; Robert Body, a nephew of pilot Menzies (who had spent years trying to unravel his uncle's fate); a son and daughter of air gunner Eliot; a representative from the British Embassy; and representatives from the



The question of what caused the Hudson to crash has been the subject of some conjecture. Suggestions in the past ranged from mechanical failure, to a pilot's error (one theory being that the aircraft came in so low that it hit the IJsselmeer causeway) to the aircraft being shot down by Flak or by a night-fighter. That FK790 was in fact shot down was already suggested by the observation in 1944 that one of the dead agents recovered from the water showed a gunshot wound, and would appear to be proven beyond doubt by the cannon shell hole found in the propeller salvaged in 1997 (*left*). Less clear is whether the Hudson was shot down by Flak or by a night-fighter. The case for a night-fighter is weakened by the fact that the only Allied bomber claimed shot down over Holland that night, by a Bf 110 of III./NJG 1 from Leeuwarden, was a *four*-engined bomber downed at 0121 hours — which at first sight seems to rule it out as a candidate, as a Hudson had two engines. However, visual aircraft recognition in the dark under combat conditions is reputed for its unreliability, and the German pilot may well have erred in his identification. Also, the time of the Hudson's crash was later assumed to be 0130 hours (from the watches found on the dead bodies which had stopped at this time), and this comes remarkably close to 0121. All factors weighed, the night-fighter seems the most probable cause, although Flak remains a possibility.

The final act. On October 21, 1998, the remains of Flight Lieutenant John Menzies were buried beside his three fellow-crew members in the CWGC plot in Makkum Churchyard. The interment was preceded by a commemoration service in the old church. (J. Werkhoven)

organisations which had salvaged the aircraft.

The last act took place 15 months after the plane's recovery. His identity having been positively established, on October 21, 1998, Flight Lieutenant John Watherston Menzies was buried with full military honours in Makkum Cemetery, alongside the three other members of his crew. Present at the funeral were Menzies' sister, especially flown in from Australia; Robert Body (who had co-ordinated the ceremony with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission) and Rick Body; the widow of wireless operator Withers with her daughter and grandson; the son and daughter of air gunner Eliot; relatives of agents Kwint, Verhoef and Bockma; the

The coffin is lowered into the grave. (J. Werkhoven)

APPOINTMENT IN LONDON

By Trevor Popple

The release in 1954 of Michael Anderson's film *The Dam Busters* thrust No. 617 Squadron, its leader Wing Commander Guy Gibson, together with Dr Barnes Wallis and his 'bouncing bomb' into the British — if not the world's — popular consciousness.

But February 12, 1953, had seen the London premiere of an earlier homage to RAF Bomber Command, in the form of Philip Leacock's *Appointment in London* — a reference to a pending investiture at Buckingham Palace — starring a youthful Dirk Bogarde as Wing Commander Tim Mason, a bomber pilot three operations away from completing his third tour. Set in a single month in 1943 on a fictitious bomber station, the picture features the equally fictitious No. 188 Squadron, equipped with the Avro Lancaster.

And it is the collection of Lancasters assembled for Leacock's film which forms a link with *The Dam Busters* (see *After the Battle* No. 10). It is of course well known that three machines were brought out of storage and modified for that picture, being joined by one, or possibly two, others. But in the summer of 1952, five had been dusted off for use in *Appointment in London,* with three of them going on to appear in *The Dam Busters,* two of which were modified to carry the film version of the mine designed by Wallis.

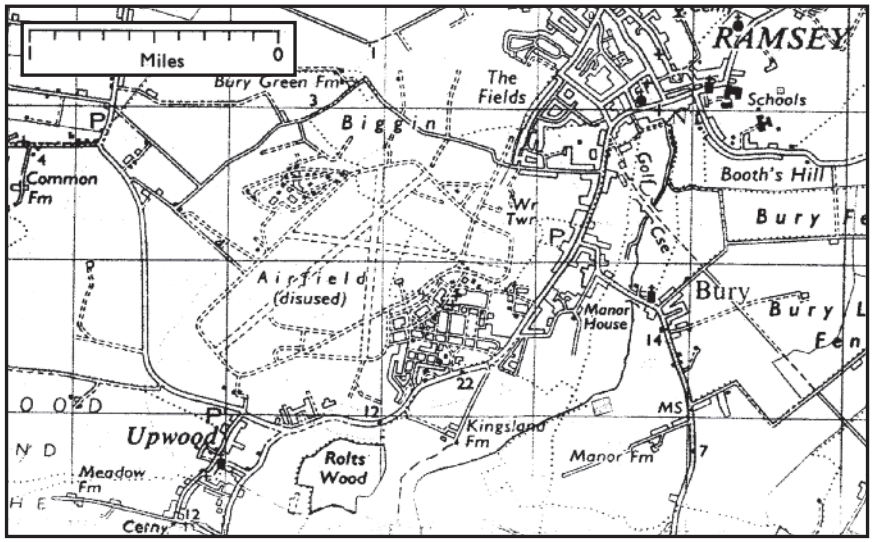
Broadly, *Appointment in London* was photographed at two locations: RAF Upwood in Huntingdonshire, then a heavy bomber base, and home to Nos. 7, 148 and 214 Squadrons, each operating the Avro Lincoln, and Shepperton Studios in Middlesex, where sets were built for most of the interior scenes, one exception being the party sequence in the Officers' Mess, which was photographed at Upwood.

Four Lancasters, NX673, NX679, NX782 (all Austin Motors-built B.VIIs) and TW862 (an Armstrong Whitworth B.1) were prepared for the picture by No. 20 Maintenance Unit at Aston Down in Wales, and sent to Upwood during the last week of May, where they remained during June, and for part of July. The movement cards record them as all being back at No. 20 MU by the 25th, by which time Leacock and his cast and crew were wrapping up at Upwood and making ready to shoot interiors at Shepperton during August. The fifth machine, TW883, also an Armstrong Whitworth B.1, and stored at No. 38 MU, was, to quote its movement card 'on loan to Mayflower Pictures Corp' for the second week of June. It has to be assumed that the location was Upwood.

The three B.VIIs carried the same colour scheme in Leacock's picture as they would later in *The Dam Busters,* complete with light propeller spinners, and the appropriate roundels and fin flashes for 1943. Code letters IH were allocated, and identified examples include: TW862 as IH-S, NX673 as IH-B and NX782 as IH-V, Bogarde's machine, V-Victor. For *Appointment in London,* however, the B.VIIs retained the American-made Martin dorsal turret with twin .50-calibre machine guns, which was peculiar to the mark, that two (NX673 and NX679) were to certainly lose for the later picture. TW862 retained its more traditional Frazer-Nash dorsal turret.

In preparing four of the 'old ladies', as Leacock dubbed them, to look their best No. 20 MU did their job perhaps too well,

Top: **You can't see the join: one of the B.VIIs being towed into position at the end of the line with three of her sisters for the impressive No. 188 Squadron line-up at Upwood, prior to Bogarde's 90th mission. This set-up was only seen briefly before dissolving through to the next shot. In this photograph the moving truck on the tarmac effectively covers the point where the Lancasters and the Lincolns meet, though in the film the joint is actually by the other truck parked further away. The five Lancasters were later sold for scrap like so many others, with TW883 possibly going in 1952, and TW862 certainly going towards the end of 1954, followed by the three B.VIIs in July 1956. RAF Upwood ceased to be an operational base when its Canberra squadron was disbanded in 1961, becoming instead a training centre for clerical and finance students within Support Command. In December 1981 RAF ownership ceased, with the airfield being passed to the USAF until 1995 when it reverted to British government control. The flying field was sold to a local farmer while the fenced off technical site** *(above)* **awaits disposal.**



Left: **The beginning of the film: it's August 1943, and a moment of sobering reflection upon his own mortality for Wing Commander Tim Mason (Dirk Bogarde, right), after being handed a buckled piece of airframe, just removed from his Lancaster's port rudder, following his 87th mission. Major 'Mac' Baker, the USAAF liaison officer (William Sylvester), looks on. Having scrounged a ride on the operation, even replacing Bogarde's wounded rear gunner, Baker questions his mortality too. The Lancaster is probably NX782, though the rudder from which the metal is retrieved in a separate shot has a post-war fin flash, which would suggest that it belonged to a Lincoln.** *Right:* **Upwood lies eight miles north of Huntingdon in Cambridgeshire.**

because in order to create an image of squadron strength, these dames had to be supported at Upwood by Lincolns in some of the ground scenes. This ruse generally worked well enough: as an example, a Lincoln would be seen from the rear quarter parked in the middle distance behind a Lancaster. A truck would in turn be parked in front of the Lincoln to hide the anachronistic post-war fin flash, large serial number, and most of the Type D fuselage roundel. In yet another scene, a Lincoln's upper wing Type D roundel is distinctly in evidence, as is its serial, RF344. For this machine, an Armstrong Whitworth-built MkII, appearing in the film was the closest it would ever get to serving in a squadron during the course of its 12-year existence. Having been shunted from MU to MU, or OCU, and having spent time with English Electric and A. V. Roe during the late 1940s, it was sent to Upwood in May 1952 to join the Station Flight, which happened to be just in time for the film's location shooting. During the next five years it continued its nomadic existence before being sold for scrap in August 1957.

In an interview given just before he died in July 1990, Leacock had the following to say about his film. '*Appointment in London* was my first big-budget picture, and Dirk Bogarde and I got on extremely well. It was a very hard working picture, with a lot of night shooting; I was incapable of handing over to a second-unit director, out of pride or whatever, so I was working two shifts at one point when we were on location. We got wonderful co-operation for all the planes and so forth.'

Nearly ten years later he directed another wartime aviation film, *The War Lover,* featuring Steve McQueen. In addition to film work he also moved into American television, directing episodes of series such as *Gunsmoke, Bonanza* and *Hawaii Five-0.*

Aubrey Baring, co-producer of *Appointment in London* (with Maxwell Setton), and Leacock had served in the RAF during the war, but it was John Wolldridge, the film's script writer and composer of its original score, who — with Robert Westerby — really brought authority to the story. Woodridge had served as a Flight Commander under Guy Gibson in No. 106 Squadron, before becoming CO of No. 105 Squadron, operating the Mosquito — and also becoming one of the Premier Pathfinder pilots. As a consequence there is one school of thought which believes that Bogarde's character, Wing Commander Mason, is based upon Gibson, whereas another has it that Mason is based upon Wooldridge himself.

Leacock assembled a cast of players who all became very familiar faces on British screens during the course of the 1950s and 1960s, with each performing his or her stereotypical rôle with competence. Bogarde was the exception inasmuch as he was desperate to break away from his screen image at that time as a petty villain or 'spiv' 'being chased by coppers nightly through the tunnels of Mornington Crescent Underground' as he put it. As a contract player for the Rank Organisation, who had pigeon-holed him as 'working class', he had had no choice but to accept a procession of what he called 'cloth cap and raincoat' parts, the most remembered being PC George Dixon's killer in *The Blue Lamp.*

Upwood then; Upwood now. Another appointment in London: the film's romantic interest was the competition between Bogarde and Sylvester for the favours of Eve Canyon (Dinah Sheridan), an attractive WRNS officer who had been widowed at the time of Dunkirk. Sylvester looks elated as he packs his luggage aboard the Station Flight's Tiger Moth for a rendezvous with Sheridan, whilst Bogarde has to merely grin and bear it. Taken on charge in July 1940, the Morris-built Moth, in its post-war overall silver scheme and Type D roundels, is T7187, which had been at Upwood since the end of December 1950. The Moth's pilot remains anonymous, but one cannot help but wonder whether he is the film's flying co-ordinator, Squadron Leader Peter Landon, the CO of No. 214 Squadron, one of the three Lincoln units then based at Upwood.

When Rank undertook to make *The Cruel Sea,* Bogarde saw this as a golden opportunity to demonstrate his skills as an actor by securing a rôle as an officer, or a gentleman, or both. But all his pleading, groveling and begging was to be of no avail, as was his offer to do the film without a salary. They instead offered him 'a good little moment in a lifeboat' as an able seaman, which he declined. Shortly after, Mayflower Productions, the small production company for whom Leacock was making *Appointment in London,* asked if Rank would loan Bogarde to them to play the lead in the film. They consented, taking half of his salary for themselves in the process.

But for Bogarde this was something of a turning point; subsequently the critics enjoyed his performance, with one relieved to see him with a haircut and a shave. Also this was the first picture in which he was able to use his own accent and that, together with his RAF officer's uniform, presented the audience with a very different image. '(It) was the first time I actually made any kind of impression for good on the screen', he remarked in his autobiography.

Dinah Sheridan was cast as WRNS officer Eve Canyon, the film's romantic interest, visiting from Naval Intelligence in Whitehall. And in addition to *Appointment in London,* 1953 also saw the release of *Genevieve* which became her most well-known film, which co-starred John Gregson, Kenneth More and Kay Kendall.

Other key figures in the cast were Bryan Forbes as Pilot Officer Peter Greeno, destined to die returning from a raid; the ubiquitous Sam Kydd as a cockney 'erk'; William Sylvester, an American actor who did a lot of British films and TV in the 'fifties and 'sixties, as Major 'Mac' Baker, an amorous USAAF liaison officer who vies with Bogarde for Dinah Sheridan's affections; and Bill Kerr as Australian pilot Flight Lieutenant Bill Brown, seemingly almost rehearsing for his rôle as 'Micky' Martin in *The Dam Busters.*

Another link with that film is actor Harold Siddons, who, whilst hardly a household name, was to spend his time in both pictures in the Operations Room on the telephone, either reporting on Bogarde's 90th mission and his returning Lancasters, or relating the progress of the dam's raid to Air Marshal Harris and Barnes Wallis, in the form of Basil Sydney and Michael Redgrave respectively. It is Siddons who exclaims: 'It's *Nigger!* It's gone!' when he receives the message that the Möhne dam has been breached.

It's good to talk: the briefing scene on the set at Shepperton with Bogarde relating the planning details for what will be his 90th operation. Seated left on the platform is actor Harold Siddons, veteran of both *Appointment in London* and *The Dam Busters* — off the telephone for once. He also served as a Hurricane pilot in Pimpernel Squadron in the Battle of Britain picture *Angels One Five* (see *After the Battle* No. 30). Next to him sits Ian Hunter playing Group Captain Logan. Beyond Bogarde is the Navigation Officer (uncredited), and extreme right is the brilliant Richard Wattis as Pascal, the Signals Officer. During a long career Wattis did his share for the war film genre with *The Colditz Story, The Longest Day* and *Operation Crossbow.*

There were a few other faces who had appeared in both films, too minor to mention, though Nigel Stock, who plays Gibson's bomb-aimer, Flying Officer Spafford, dies in a crash on the airfield in *Appointment in London.* This was effected by setting the camera up to look along a shallow rise on the runway. After making a low pass over the field, Stock's damaged aircraft — one of the B.VIIs — attempts to land and disappears from view behind the rise. A shot of an explosion on the same spot is then seen via an edit to create the loss of the machine and those aboard.

From an aerial action point of view, *Appointment in London* is well served by the standards of the 1950s, keeping archive footage to an absolute minimum. Shots of Lancasters taxi-ing, taking off and landing, sharply edited to create the illusion of greater numbers, are used to illustrate the squadron's departure and return for Bogarde's three penultimate operations.

The picture concludes with his 90th mission during which he takes over as the master bomber. The desire to show the raid in some detail meant that Leacock had to assemble a mixed formation of at least seven Lancasters and Lincolns, including one of the latter acting as camera-mount, the camera being

Left: **RAF personnel in the watch office at Upwood towards the end of the picture, as Bogarde's Lanc comes in to land after his final mission: this scene being one where Leacock followed the 'real-people-in-real-jobs' style of film-making in the fashion of the wartime documentaries, such as *Target for Tonight* — the officer in the background also appearing in one of the film's earlier scenes, incidentally. Numerous airmen at Upwood were drafted in to appear either with minor speaking parts, or as extras. Due to a lack of WRAFs some of the officers' wives were fitted out in costumier's uniforms. In fact, director Philip Leacock seems to have been influenced by Harry Watt's picture, as a lot of the scenes at the beginning of *Appointment in London* are very derivative.** *Right:* **The control tower has been demolished and the land claimed by sheep!**

fitted in the dorsal turret. These scenes were shot as 'day-for-night' in order to match with the cockpit shots, and the archive inserts. Of necessity, archive footage of marker flares and a burning city at night was used, coupled with the destruction of a model target in the vein of *Target for Tonight* (see *After the Battle* videocassette No. 20). One clip of German ack-ack gunners actually comes from that film. Harry Watt, its director, revealed in an interview with the author some years ago that he had dressed British gunners in costumiers' uniforms for the shot.

Leacock was quite right to praise the level of co-operation that the production company received from the Air Ministry and the RAF. Serving aircrew from the three squadrons based at Upwood flew both the Lincolns and the Lancasters as required under the supervision of Squadron Leader Peter Landon, the CO of No. 214 Squadron, who usually flew NX673 during the filming. Squadron Leader 'Lofty' Hayes, CO of No. 148 Squadron, flew NX782, with Flight Lieutenant George Fletcher of No. 7 Squadron flying the third of the B.VIIs, NX679. TW862 was handled by Flying Officer Reg Wareham, whilst the fifth Lancaster, TW883, was used for some ground sequences only — perhaps cockpit close-ups — though its serial is not evident in the film.

When the film was premiered at the Leicester Square theatre in the presence of the Duchess of Gloucester on February 12, 1953, according to the *Daily Sketch* seven RAF holders of the VC were in attendance, though none were named. Critical reaction to the film was generally favourable. Group Captain Hugh Dundas writing in the *Daily Express* commended the picture saying that it was about time that Bomber Command got its fair share of the limelight, having been overshadowed by the media's preoccupation with Fighter Command for too long.

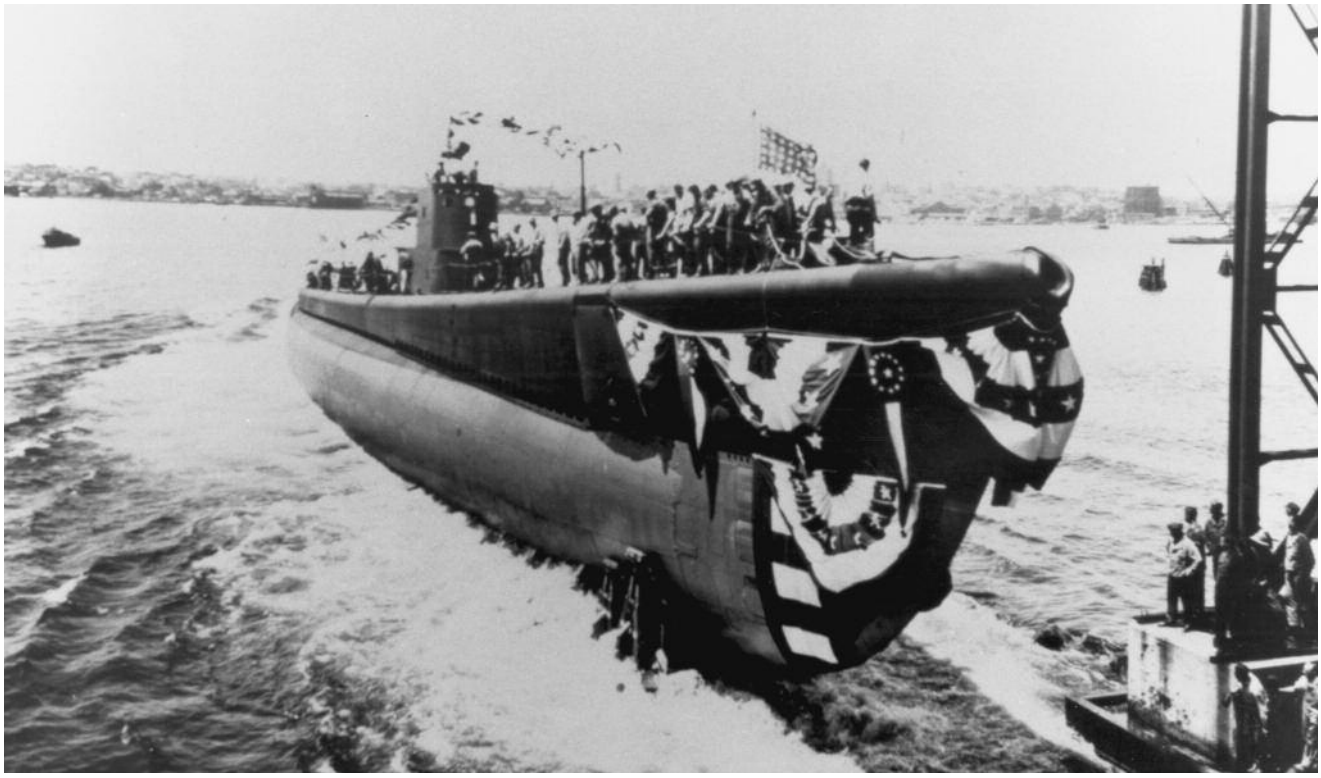
There were one or two mildly unfavourable passing comparisons with *Twelve O'Clock High* from 1949 in which Gregory Peck had succumbed to the stresses that Bogarde is struggling to contain in *Appointment in London,* claiming that the earlier American film had been more powerful. And another reviewer commented critically upon the film's stereotypes in the forms of Bogarde's 'Wing Commander heading for a nervous breakdown' and Sylvester's 'amorous American liaison officer'. What is interesting is that if by 1953 these characters were already looking stale enough to arouse comment, then why did the British war film genre with all its stock characters, casts and recurrent themes last as long as it did?

The Officers' Mess filled with extras: the only recognisable faces are Bill Kerr and Bryan Forbes by the table to the right of the steward, shortly before being summoned to Bogarde's office to learn that they've both been awarded the DFC, with Bogarde getting a bar to his DSO. In a month's time, they will go to London to receive their awards from His Majesty the King — hence the film's title.

Rarely seen on television for many years, Britain's Channel Four have tended to run *Appointment in London* from time to time during weekday afternoons along with other fairly obscure British war pictures. But whereas the film made people sit up and take some notice of Bogarde's performance and 'new' image (though Rank never commented, according to his autobiography), some of the film's aeronautical 'stars' were only allowed one more appearance on the big screen for Michael Anderson before being consigned to the scrap heap.

And in a sense the same fate has befallen *Appointment in London.* There is no getting away from the fact that the picture has been virtually smothered out of existence by *The Dam Busters,* which of course has been sustained by the legend of Gibson and No. 617 Squadron in spite of what the revisionists might have to say about the raid today. And this is unfortunate, because *Appointment in London* is a very good British war film of the 1950s, which provides all the ingredients that one expects from a picture of that era. Its production team, particularly John Wooldridge, brought an air of authenticity to the screenplay, and the level of co-operation with the RAF and the Ministry probably could not have been bettered, which when put together with the film's highly professional cast of familiar faces performing to type, all blend together to present an ideal TV entertainment for a 'nineties autumn Sunday afternoon.

Left: **Flight Lieutenant Bill Brown (Bill Kerr, left) tells Pilot Officer Greeno, nick-named 'the Brat' (Bryan Forbes), that he's in hot water and has been summoned to go to Wing Commander Mason's office immediately. Greeno had been sending a telegram to his wife (Anne Leon) after each mission, which Bogarde regards as a breach of security. The airman looking on apprehensively is Sam Kydd, a prominent member of Britain's legion of veteran war film actors from the 1950s. Greeno's Lancaster was S-Sugar played by the B.1 TW862, distinctive beside the B.VIIs because of its H2S ventral radome and more prominent Frazer-Nash dorsal turret. Because of these features it is easily recognisable in the formation assembled for Leacock, and flown to depict Bogarde's 90th operation.** *Right:* **The morning after his flight in Upwood's Tiger Moth, William Sylvester meets Dinah Sheridan at her Whitehall office building as she comes off night duty. Ultimately, Sylvester's overconfident approach fails, with Sheridan falling for Bogarde's quiet charm. The romantic interlude is to be a brief one, however: taken off bombing operations Bogarde is posted to the Far East at the film's end.**



RETURN TO THE DARTER

By D. C. Sangerhausen

During the Second World War a total of 52 submarines were lost by the United States Navy, or nearly 18 per cent of all submarines that saw combat. Total personnel losses were 374 officers and 3,131 enlisted men, or 16 and 13 per cent of operational personnel respectively.

As with the loss of personnel and equipment in any theatre of the war, the causes of submarine losses varied. Of the 52 submarines lost, 48 were lost due to enemy ships, aircraft, mines, friendly fire, or unknown enemy action. The remaining four, *S-27, S-36, S-39,* and USS *Darter* (SS-227) were lost due to stranding during combat operations.

Darter began life in Groton, Connecticut, on October 20, 1942, her keel being laid by the Electric Boat Company. With an overall length of 311 feet 9 inches, a beam of 27 feet, and displacement of 1,525 tons surfaced (2,410 tons submerged), the *Darter*, a Gato-class submarine, was launched on June 6, 1943 by the ship's sponsor, the wife of the Electric Boat Company's shipbuilding manager, Mrs Edwin B. Wheeler. On September 7, *Darter* was placed in commission by Commander W. S. Stovall, Jr. who had already made three war patrols on the *Gudgeon* (SS-211).

After she had completed two war patrols (one freighter was damaged during the first, and another was sunk during the second), command of *Darter* was given to Lieutenant Commander David H. McClintock on June 15, 1944.

During *Darter*'s third patrol (June 21 to August 8) in the eastern Celebes Sea, she was credited with sinking the large Japanese minelayer *Tsugaru* with two torpedo hits out of the six bow shots that were fired.

FOURTH WAR PATROL

After being refitted and repainted in design 32/9SS (dark grey), *Darter* began her fourth and final patrol on September 1, 1944 with USS *Dace* (SS-247) commanded by Bladen D. Claggett. Both subs, known as the Double Ds to their crews, left Brisbane, Australia, for patrol in the Palawan Passage and the area known as Dangerous Ground. The Palawan Passage, which runs north and south between Dangerous Ground and Palawan Island, is only 30 miles wide in some areas and contains many navigational hazards. Dangerous Ground, a large area west of Palawan Island, contains regions of shallow water, shoals, rocks, and reefs. The most accurate charts available of the area at the time were provided by the Royal Navy; however, even some of these (surveyed during the previous century) were outdated.

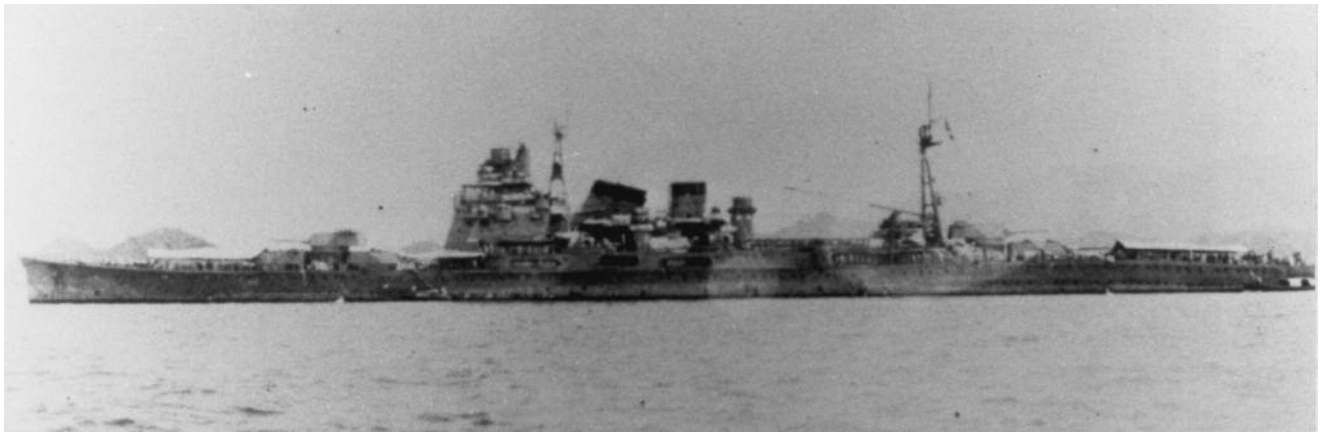
Top: **The *Darter,* a Gato-class submarine, was launched on June 6, 1943 in Groton, Connecticut. (via Admiral E. P. Wilkinson) One year later, following two war patrols under Commander W. S. Stovall, she was given a new captain: Commander David H. McClintock** *(above).* **(US Naval Academy Memorial Foundation)**

On Monday, October 9, *Darter* entered her assigned area and submerged for patrol in Palawan Passage. Submerged patrolling was chosen because this part of the passage was narrow enough to permit sighting of any convoy attempting passage at the midway point, and because the airfield at Puerto Princesa on the east side of Palawan was held by the Japanese.

By Thursday 12th, *Darter* had made contact with a nine-ship convoy heading north for Balabac Strait. At 0924 hours, four low-power Mark 14 torpedoes were fired at two overlapping tankers at a range of 6,000 yards and six minutes later three hits were heard. Timing suggested two hit the forward tanker and one hit the other. At 0934 hours, the fourth torpedo was heard to explode as it reached the end of its run. A minute later *Darter* was attacked by seven aerial bombs exploding close by, but no damage was sustained. Although a 10,000-ton tanker was severely damaged during *Darter*'s attack, it was not sunk. This same convoy was later attacked by *Dace* which sunk a 10,000-ton tanker, a 7,500-ton transport, and crippled a second tanker.

Darter picked up a news broadcast on the Allied invasion of the Philippines at midnight on October 20/21 and she immediately headed for Balabac Strait to watch for heavy units. It was assumed that the Japanese were aware of the planned invasion, and the Singapore —Balabac—Mindanao Sea route was the shortest for any Japanese fleet which might head for Leyte Gulf.

Darter and *Dace* met at midnight on Sunday, October 22. With a line thrown between, the vessels cruised 50 feet apart at five knots. While the commanders planned the remainder of their coordinated patrol, movies were exchanged between the two crews. Sixteen minutes later the radar opera-



The Japanese force opposing General Douglas McArthur's Leyte invasion fleet was commanded by Vice-Admiral Takeo Kurita aboard the heavy cruiser *Atago* *(above).*

tor passed the word of a contact at 131 degrees, and 30,000 yards, 'probably rain'. McClintock went down the conning tower to have a look for himself and decided to pursue.

By 0020 hours (October 23) McClintock was certain the contact was a convoy because the contact bearing changed to the left. Both subs began chasing at full power as the targets headed up Palawan Passage. A contact report was sent giving an estimate of a task force of 11 heavy ships. This was based on the targets' high speed (22 knots) and the long radar ranges obtained. The tracking party felt that attaining attack position would be hopeless due to the high speed of the targets. However, as *Darter* continued to pursue at an average of 19 knots, the target speed began to slow, until eventually reaching 15 knots. *Darter* and *Dace* could now, in time, overtake the targets.

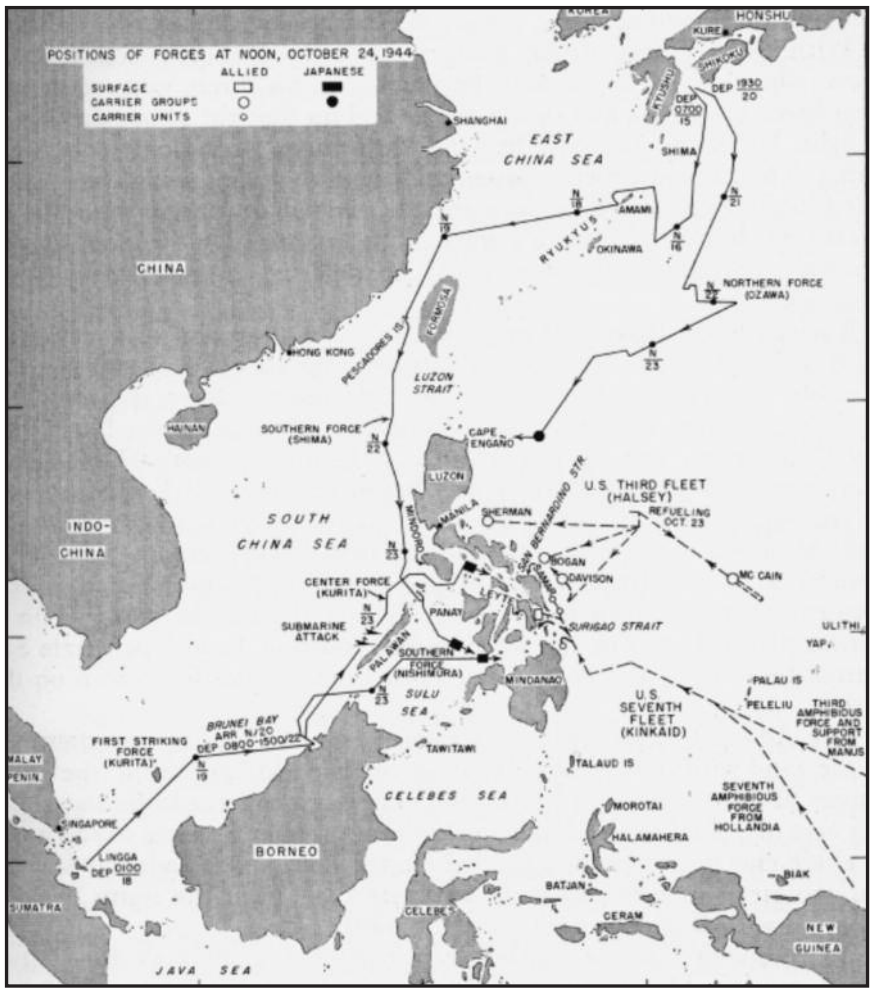
Darter was to attack the left-flank column first, with *Dace* about five miles up the track to attack the starboard column. It was considered vital to see and identify the force which was probably on its way to interfere with the Leyte invasion. McClintock knew that there could be no radical zig during the night due to the size of the force and narrowness of the Passage, therefore an attack was planned for dawn.

The Japanese force being tracked by the Double Ds was the Imperial Second Fleet under Vice-Admiral Takeo Kurita. The fleet was led by the largest battleships in the world, *Yamato* and *Musashi.* As part of Operation 'Sho-Go', the Japanese defence of the Philippines, Kurita was ordered to demolish American General Douglas McArthur's invasion transports whatever the cost, for this was the Japanese Navy's last chance. Loss of Leyte would mean loss of the Philippines; loss of the Philippines meant the loss of all East Indies oil; loss of this oil resource would mean the end of the Japanese Navy.

After departing Singapore and fueling at Brunei, Kurita's fleet divided into two task forces. Under Vice-Admiral Shoji Nishimura, two battleships, the cruiser *Mogami,* and four destroyers were to swing south of Palawan, head across the Sulu Sea and meet Vice-Admiral Kiyohide Shima's Formosa Fleet in the Mindanao Sea. The combined force would then make their way into Leyte Gulf through Surigao Strait. Meanwhile, the main body, under Kurita, was to cross the Sibuyan Sea after rounding Palawan Island to the north, head through San Bernardino Strait, and then down to Leyte Gulf. This group consisted of five battleships (including the two previously mentioned), a dozen cruisers and 15 destroyers.

During the night the two subs had gone from being 17 miles abeam of the Japanese force to a position 20,000 yards dead ahead. It had been determined that the fleet being tracked was in two columns approximately two miles apart, with the left column slightly ahead of the right. McClintock's plan called for *Darter* to dive ahead of the left column and *Dace* to get in position five miles north on the opposite side of the right column. When *Darter* attacked, it was reasoned that the column would turn towards *Dace* to evade. In addition, this arrangement placed both subs in an attack position regardless if the target made a course change in either direction.

Having sent three contact reports to Rear Admiral Ralph W. Christie of South West Pacific Submarine Command, who passed them on to Admirals William F. Halsey and Thomas C. Kincaid, commanders of the US Third and Seventh Fleets respectively, at 0425, McClintock, picked the fourth and last ship (the battleship *Nagato*) in the port column because it presented the biggest radar blip. Battle stations was sounded at 0452, and at 0500 the targets sped up to 16 knots and zigged away placing the chosen target out of range. Noticing the absence of a destroyer screen, McClintock decided to target the lead ship with the bow tubes and the second ship with the stern tubes. At 0509 *Darter* reversed course, headed toward the port column and submerged.



Kurita's task force comprised seven battleships, a dozen cruisers and 19 destroyers. After refuelling at Brunei on October 22, 1943, the force split into two, the major convoy proceeding along the western coast of Palawan Island. All this time the ships were being tracked by two US Navy submarines, the *Darter* and *Dace*.

Captain McClintock's opposite number in the *Dace* was his former classmate, Commander Bladen D. Claggett.

By 0517 it was light enough to see shapes through the periscope. *Darter* was dead ahead of the port column but could not identify any of the ships. Visibility was better to the east where battleships and cruisers could be seen several thousand yards away. Also, two destroyers were noted to the east, both drawing left but not echo-ranging.

At 0525 *Darter* made ready all ten tubes. Depth was set for ten feet. Two minutes later she changed course to the right to parallel the column and be able to fire all tubes. The first four ships were now identifiable as heavy cruisers and the fifth a battleship.

At a range of 780 yards to the first cruiser and an angle on the bow of almost zero, the targets zigged in a ship's left, to course 350 degrees. *Darter*'s fire-control party quickly scrambled to obtain new set-ups and at 0532 she began firing the bow tubes at the lead cruiser. After firing two torpedoes, an additional spread was fired ahead of the target and the remainder inside the target's length.

When the last torpedo left the forward tube, *Darter* swung hard left to bring the stern tubes to bear and started getting a firing set-up on the second cruiser. While in the turn, torpedoes began hitting the first cruiser. Five hits were heard and McClintock swung the periscope back to the first cruiser. Dense black smoke covered her from stem to stern, and bright orange flames shot into the air from all areas topside. She was still going ahead but her number one turret was already cutting the water.

The rapidly sinking cruiser was the *Atago,* Admiral Kurita's flagship. Kurita was in his cabin having tea with his chief-of-staff Rear-Admiral Koyanagi. Kurita was rising out of his chair when he was flung back as the ship lurched. The first torpedo struck the bow causing the ship to immediately slide forward as if going downhill. The ship's Captain, Araki, immediately ordered hard left rudder away from the first explosion. His orders were too late and the remaining four torpedoes struck the side of the ship with the last striking the stern.

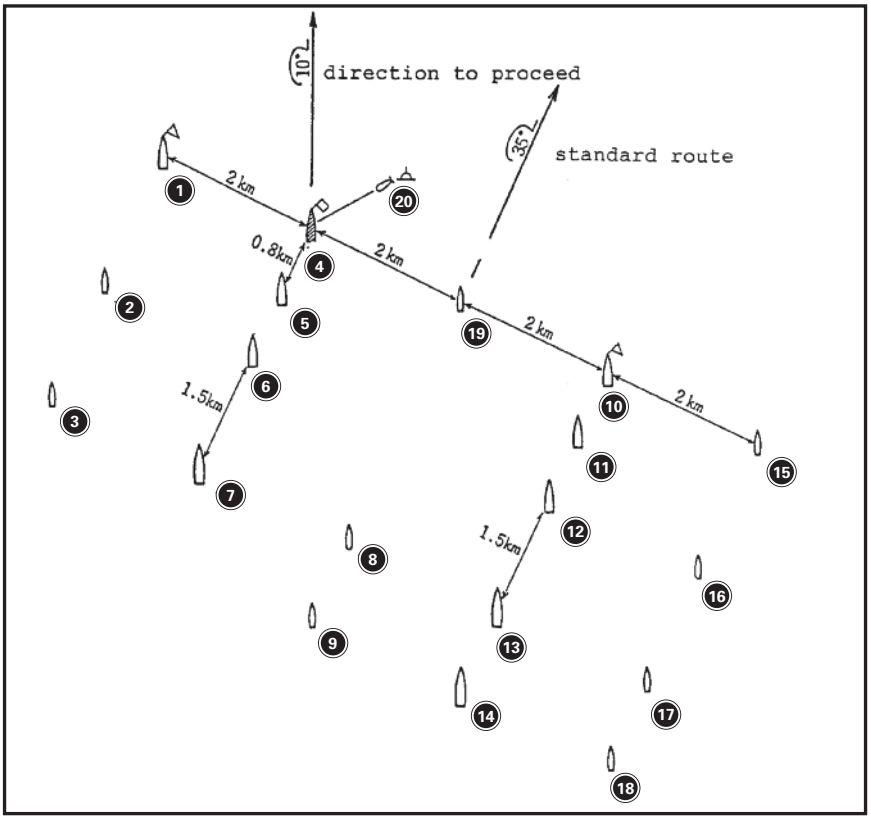
Almost simultaneous to the torpedoes striking *Atago,* the stern tubes were fired at the second cruiser *Takao.* At a range of 1,525 yards, the torpedoes were spread over the center 3/4 of her length. *Darter* started deep and evaded on a base course of 220 degrees.

Four torpedoes were heard to hit *Takao,* and McClintock felt certain that four would sink her too. However, the fourth hit was 25 seconds later than it should have been, and McClintock reasoned it may have struck the third cruiser. In fact, only two of *Darter*'s torpedoes hit *Takao,* the first hit the starboard side under the bridge, and the second hit the stern. The latter shot hit the rudder and two outboard propellers, and almost immediately she began to list 10 degrees to starboard. She lost power to three boilers that had flooded and went dead in the water.

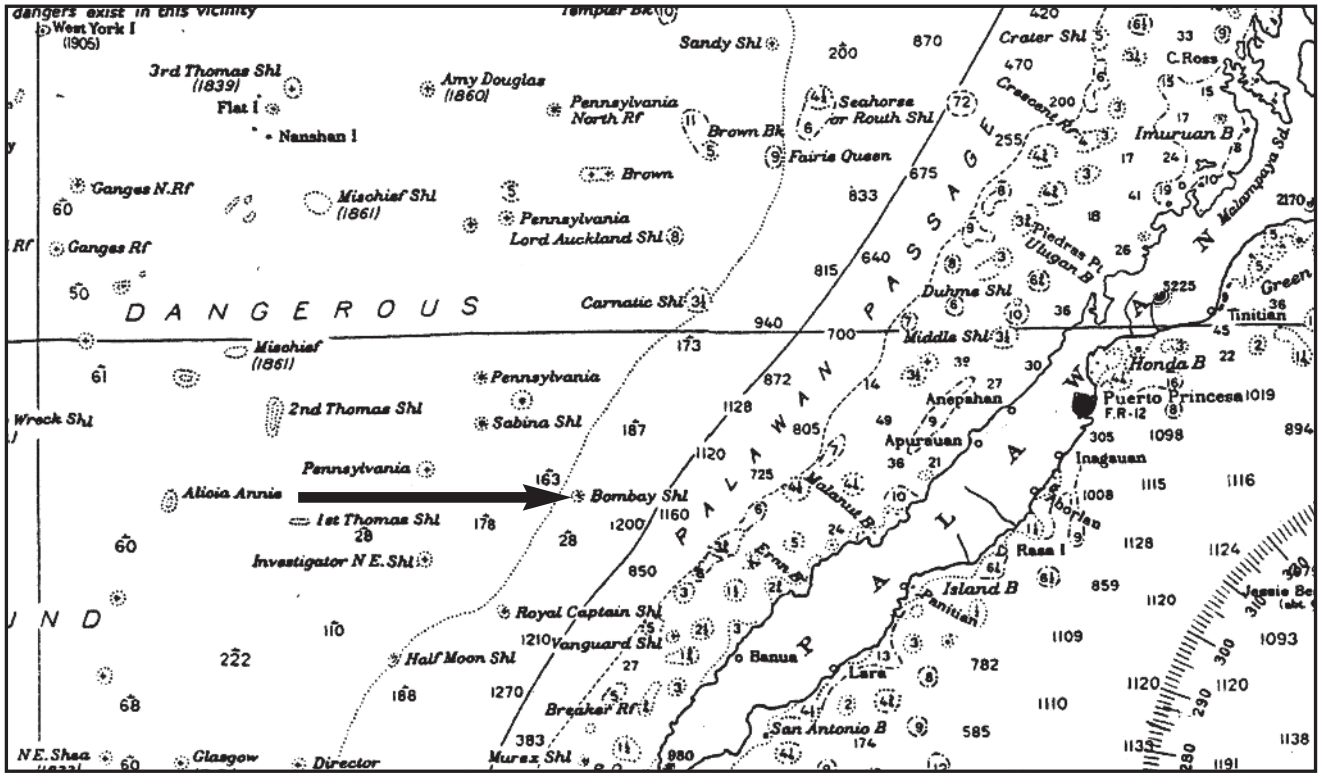
With his flagship sinking beneath him, Kurita and 206 of his crewmen were taken aboard the destroyer *Kishinami* and at 0636 he gave orders that he was transferring his command and staff to the battleship *Yamato.* Kurita then continued north with the remainder of his armada, skirting the Caiamian Islands north of Palawan and swinging eastward to clear the southern tip of Mindoro.

The convoy's destroyers began their depth-charge attack at 0539 but the attack was inaccurate. Within a few minutes *Darter's* crew began to hear breaking-up noises through the hull and in all compartments. The noises increased in intensity until they seemed to be right overhead, at times they shook the ship violently, but caused no damage.

At 0550 *Darter* heard four distant explosions and McClintock rightly assumed they were from *Dace*'s torpedoes. *Dace* had fired a salvo of six torpedoes at the heavy cruiser *Maya,* which was the sister ship of *Takao.* Four of the six shots hit the ship on the port side: one in the chain locker forward, a second opposite number one gun turret, the third in number seven boiler room, and the fourth in the after engine room. No amount of effort made by *Maya's* crew could help her



At 0532 hours on October 23, the *Darter* launched her attack on Kurita's force, singling out his cruiser for the first salvo of torpedoes. This illustration by Sachiko Williams shows the position of the formation when *Darter*'s attack began. At a range of 2,880 yards to the first cruiser and an angle on the bow of almost zero, the targets zigged in a ship's left to course 350 degrees. The *Darter*'s fire-control party quickly scrambled to obtain new set-ups and at 0532 she began firing the bow tubes at the lead cruiser. After firing two torpedoes, an additional spread was fired ahead of the target and the remainder inside the target's length. [1] *Noshiro,* [2] *Okinami,* [3] *Naganami,* [4] *Atago,* [5] *Takao,* [6] *Chokai,* [7] *Nagato,* [8] *Asashimo,* [9] *Shimakaze,* [10] *Myoko,* [11] *Haguro,* [12] *Maya,* [13] *Yamato,* [14] *Musashi,* [15] *Hayashimo,* [16] *Akishimo,* [17] *Hamanami,* [18] *Fujinami,* [19] *Kishinami,* [20] *Darter.*



Extract from the US Hydrographic Office Chart No. 559 used by Commander McClintock during the war with the Bombay Shoal west of Palawan Island arrowed. It was here that the *Darter* ran aground just after midnight on the 23rd/24th.

after sustaining such damage. She began to sink immediately and was completely under within eight minutes of the first hit.

From 0600 to 0604 *Darter* recorded 'Tremendous explosions, probably magazines. It is estimated that from 0600 on, our targets' breaking-up noises began to combine with those of *Dace*'s target.'

At 0605 *Darter* began to be depth-charged once again, with the last of an estimated 36 charges exploding at 0630. Four destroyers could be heard echo-ranging, and *Darter* continued to evade until 0820 when she came to periscope depth. *Darter* could see the *Takao* at 12,000 yards listing slightly to starboard and dead in the water. Three destroyers could be seen near the cruiser and three aircraft were circling the vicinity.

At 0900 battle stations were secured, giving the crew a chance to eat and to reload *Darter* for further attacks. A half-hour later one destroyer, believed to be rescuing survivors, departed to the north. *Darter* started in again on the cruiser *Takao* at 1100. Thinking that the destroyers would attempt to tow the crippled ship towards Palawan Barrier Reef, McClintock ordered Claggett to take attack position on a bearing of 150 degrees and ten miles from the cruiser, while *Darter* would assume a position ten miles and 50 degrees from the ship, thereby forming a pincher.

At 2200 *Takao* got underway on a course of about 220 degrees and at a speed of from four to six knots. Her course was quite erratic, and it appeared as though she was steering by alternating her outboard engines and screws.

Over the next 11 hours *Darter* tried several times to approach and finish off the *Takao.* However, each attempt was pre-empted by the searching radars of the destroyers. Therefore, another message was sent to *Dace* that told her to attack when ready and that *Darter* was ending-around to starboard for an attack at radar depth. Full speed was ordered on all four engines as the sub performed its end-around at a range of 15,000 yards from the target. McClintock's new plan called for an attack at 0100 (October 24).

At 2400 *Darter* had about one hour to run to gain attack position. She was approximately 18,000 yards from the target and making 17 knots, and had not been able to take a navigational fix for 30 hours. Throughout the previous battle, evasion tactics, and subsequent attempts to finish off the cruiser, *Darter* had been navigating by dead-reckoning, a navigational process involving time, speed, and distance. For example, once an accurate fix on the ship's position is obtained, the navigator dead-reckons the ship's position by tracking the ship's course, speed, and amount of time traveled. Based on these figures a calculation is made to determine distance traveled and therefore the ship's position. Although not the most accurate method of navigation, it was *Darter*'s only option.

Five minutes later, with the Officer of the Deck and the Captain on the bridge, and the navigator plotting in the conning tower, the boat's bow began to rise out of the water. At the same time the stern was pushed under water all the way up to the after engine room hatch. A deafening roar and the sound of scraping metal was heard. McClintock's first assumption was that *Darter* had been torpedoed. But as the boat settled with a 3 degrees up angle and 3 degrees port list, and soundings showed 9 feet from the bow to abaft the conning tower and 18 feet at the stern, it became more than apparent *Darter* had run aground.

In fact, the submarine had run 150 feet up, and onto, Bombay Shoal. The shoal, approximately 50 miles from Eran Bay on the west side of Palawan Island, is bowl-shaped and runs for a mile and a half. The opposite side of the shoal from where *Darter* hit is relatively open though still quite shallow. Fortunately for the crew she hit a little more than an hour before high tide which allowed her to ride up on the reef instead of colliding with it. Also, if it had been full high tide at the time of the grounding, *Darter* in all probability would have ridden over the ridge of the shoal and been trapped in the middle like a fish in a bowl. Crew members described the experience as being similar to someone applying the brakes in an automobile. The Captain said: 'She rose up, came down, rose up again and back down. After the third time she settled down.'

McClintock immediately sent the message to *Dace*, 'We are aground'. Without hesitation Claggett gave up his attack on *Takao* and set course for *Darter* at maximum speed. The damage reports from all compartments were good, and with a few exceptions, the boat was intact and no leaks could be found. With high tide due at 0140, *Darter*'s crew began lightening the ship.

Within ten minutes of striking the reef, *Naganami* (the starboard destroyer defending the cruiser) began closing on *Darter.* It was assumed *Naganami* must have heard the sub hit. While some of the *Darter* crew began to busy themselves destroying secret and confidential matter and gear, the remainder of the crew continued to lighten the boat.

By 0030 the range to the destroyer was 12,100 yards. McClintock and his officers were convinced that if the crew were taken prisoner, they would surely be tortured if not executed once the Japanese discovered *Darter* was responsible for the recent destruction to their fleet. Therefore orders were given, and the crew began to man the guns in anticipation of battling it out. Shortly thereafter, the destroyer's range steadied for a few minutes, then began to open. By 0100 *Darter* lost radar contact with the destroyer.

All efforts continued to be made to lighten the ship, and all fuel oil, except enough to keep the ship going for a few days, was blown overboard. The crew also removed all fresh water, variable water, lube oil, the anchor, ammunition, and commissary stores. At 0140 *Darter* was challenged by *Dace*'s radar.

High tide arrived at 0146 and McClintock began attempts to remove *Darter* from the reef but none of the engines would run because all saltwater intakes were plugged with coral. Therefore he attempted to back the boat using full battery power. At the same time, he ordered the crew topside and had them gather in a group on the stern in effort to break the ship's bow free of the coral. When the first attempt failed, McClin-

tock ordered some of the crew to race forward of the stern and then back aft while other members of the crew ran back-and-forth across the deck in an attempt to rock the ship in conjunction with the backing power of the main motors. After three minutes the ship had not moved and her heading remained the same.

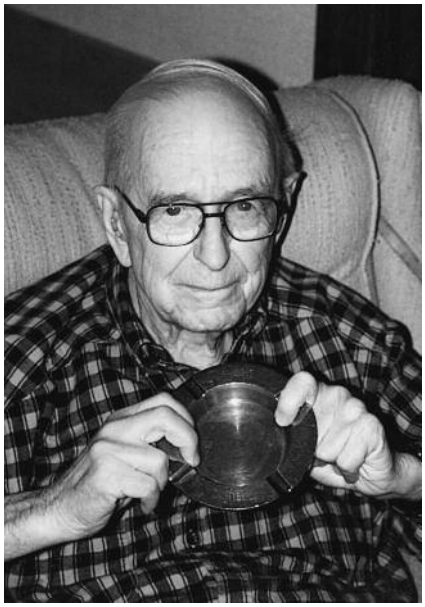
After a short break, McClintock tried again to free the ship. Some of the crew looked over the side and saw water rushing forward past the hull and for a few minutes it appeared as though their efforts were successful. Unfortunately this was only an illusion created by water being pushed forward by the churning propellers. After 20 minutes all efforts were ceased. It was 0230, the tide was beginning to recede, and the tops of the boat's propellers were cutting air. McClintock knew for sure his ship was going nowhere and all efforts were now concentrated on destroying the remaining confidential gear.

Since it was still dark, and the weather conditions were clear and calm, three fires were set below decks, one in the forward engine room, one in the radio shack, and one in the officers' shower. The fires were used to destroy paperwork and before long the smoke and fumes became so intense that destruction work could only be performed for a few minutes at a time before personnel had to go topside for fresh air. Some manuals and recognition books were so thick they could only be burned a few pages at a time.

While the fires continued to burn, other crew members took up damage control hammers and began smashing equipment. Anything that would have given the enemy information about the ship's capabilities was destroyed. The electricians in the maneuvering room 'flashed over' the generators (a process of reversing the electrical polarity, then applying a voltage which destroys the generator armatures), thereby making the generators useless. The torpedomen broke all the interlocks on the forward and aft tubes. Since the ship was in salvageable waters, breaking the interlocks would prevent the Japanese from opening the inner and outer doors should they be able to refloat the sub.

At 0245 a line was thrown from the *Dace* over to the stern of *Darter*, and using two six-man rubber boats, one from each sub, the *Darter*'s crew began to leave their ship at 0304. Despite the swift currents, Claggett kept the line taught by holding *Dace* steady within 50 yards of *Darter*'s stern.

As the crew began evacuation, 50-pound demolition charges were set up in the forward torpedo room (the charges were rigged to a torpedo warhead), the after torpedo room and the control room. While walking through the sub for the last time Captain McClintock thought about what he would like to take with him. He came across the wardroom ashtray engraved with 'USS *Darter*' and placed it in his front pocket. However, this was not perhaps the best selection. Over the years to come, whenever this particular subject would come up, his wife would tease him about taking the ashtray and leaving her photograph!



When all attempts to free the submarine had failed, demolition charges were prepared and set and the crew were taken aboard the *Dace*. As he walked through his sub for the last time, Captain McClintock thought about what he would like to take with him as a souvenir. He finally selected this wardroom ashtray engraved 'USS *Darter*', and placed it in his front pocket.

With the final demolition connections made and witnessed by McClintock and his Gunnery Officer, the timer was set for 35 minutes. At 0435 the Commanding Officer was the last to abandon ship. All hands were aboard *Dace* at 0439 as she started backing away. Not a single crewmember had been injured in the grounding or during the transfer operation to *Dace*.

When the critical moment arrived at 0455, only a light explosion was heard. The bow of the sub, which should have been blown to pieces, was still intact. It was apparent that some of the 50-pound demolition charges may have exploded, but the torpedo warhead in the forward torpedo room had not. McClintock and Claggett now mused about their next step. The conclusion reached was that the charges were bad, and that *Dace* should now try to torpedo the stranded ship. Therefore, at 0510 *Dace* took up position on *Darter*'s beam and fired two of her remaining four Mark 23 torpedoes. By this time the tide was rather low, and both shots struck the reef before reaching *Darter*. Claggett then positioned *Dace* astern of the beached sub where there was a bit more water. Again, before reaching their target, both torpedoes exploded.

Dace's only remaining resource were her deck guns. Her gun crew opened up with the 4-inch deck gun putting three common and 18 high-capacity hits on *Darter* along the water line. Although the gun crew was hitting *Darter*, it appeared as though the high-capacity shells had only penetrated the outer hull and not the pressure hull. One of the hits blew up one of the normal fuel-oil tanks and may have started a fire in the forward battery, but this was not enough to seriously damage the ship.

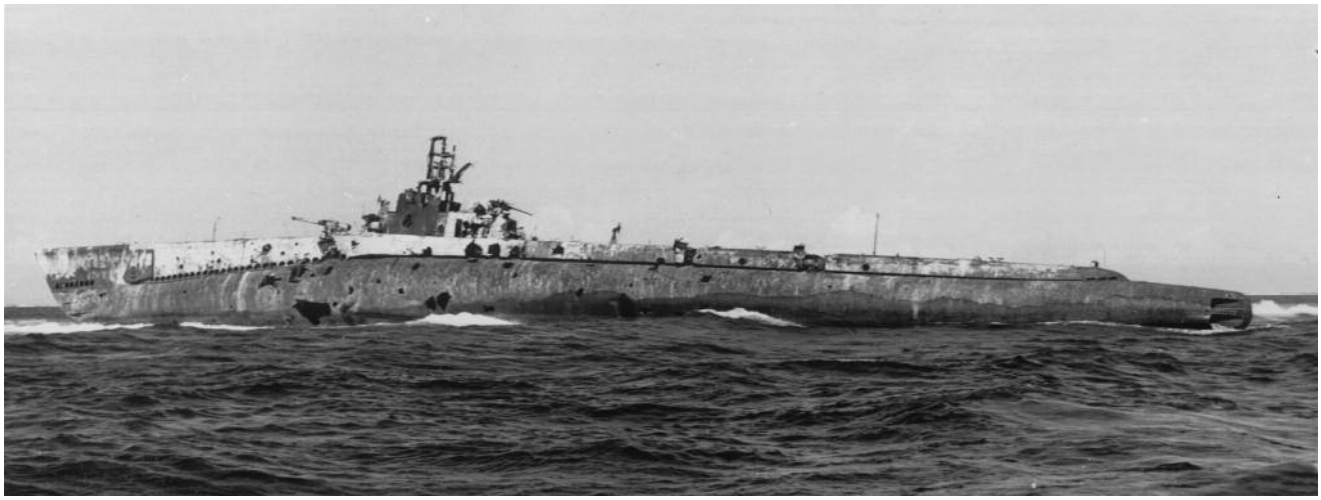
As daylight approached, and many *Dace* and *Darter* men stood on the deck watching the shelling, an observer spotted a Japanese 'Betty' bomber. *Dace* made a quick dive as men scrambled through any open hatch to get below. Claggett was uncertain if there was enough water, but with the inbound Japanese plane, he had no choice but to dive.

When the bomber arrived at the scene *Dace*'s deck was awash, but from the air *Darter* looked liked a surfaced sub and not one that was aground and crewless. The aircraft attempted to drop two bombs on *Darter* at 0558 but missed with both. The bomber continued to circle until 0710.

Claggett and McClintock began to discuss the possibility of reboarding *Darter* at nightfall to install the demolition charges from *Dace*. However, shortly after 1000, the soundman heard an echo-ranging ping coming from 170 degrees. *Dace* surfaced and both captains could see a mast heading for *Darter*. It was the Japanese destroyer *Naganami* which had received orders to leave the *Takao* and attack enemy submarines near Bombay Shoal.

Once within gun range, *Naganami* began shelling *Darter*. After about three minutes, with fires still burning below decks, a small crew of Japanese sailors boarded *Darter* with orders to retrieve anything of value while a

This is the earliest known photo of the grounded *Darter*. It was taken in the spring of 1945 by one of the members of the US Navy demolition team which boarded the submarine to determine why her explosive charges had not gone off. (US Navy)



On January 2, 1952, a party under the command of the Area Salvage Officer from the US Naval Forces Command assigned to the Thirteenth Air Force at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines was ordered to undertake the disposal of the seven torpedoes and four mines which were known to be still aboard *Darter,* and to remove everything of a classified nature or of intelligence value. This photo was taken during that operation. (Karl Fleischer USN (Ret))

'Betty' circled overhead providing air support. With no torpedoes remaining, *Dace* missed a grand opportunity to eliminate the destroyer.

While on board, the Japanese found the rough quartermaster's log. Because the log had fallen behind the chart table, it was overlooked by the *Darter* crew during their attempt to destroy all valuable documents. The log contained information as to submarine evasive maneuvers and tactics following torpedo attacks. It is uncertain, but considered probable, that the information gained from this log helped the Japanese in the latter part of the war in their anti-submarine measures.

Dace stayed out of sight until nightfall when she again returned to *Darter* with the intention of reboarding with her own demolition outfit. As *Dace* closed to within 2,000 yards, close echo-ranging was heard on the sound gear and by both commanders on the bridge. Since the ping was so loud, the immediate thought was that it came from their own sound gear. Told that *Dace*'s sound gear was secured, Claggett gave orders to reverse course and clear the area. The night was brightly moonlit (favourable conditions for a periscope attack), and *Dace* had no radar contact on any other ship. Therefore, the source of the ping was assumed to be an enemy submarine setting up for an attack on *Dace*. Later that night, *Dace* received orders to proceed to Fremantle. She was carrying 165 men. *Dace* moored along the starboard side of USS *Lapon* (SS-260) at Berth No. 4, North Wharf, Fremantle, Australia, on November 6, 1944.

AFTER THE GROUNDING

After *Dace*'s withdrawal on October 24, two further attempts were made to destroy *Darter*. The first was made by the USS *Rock* (SS-274) on the 26th. *Rock* fired six bow-tube shots, none of which exploded aside from the sixth. All torpedoes fired ran erratically with the first and fifth missing right, the second, third, and fourth missing left, and the sixth striking and exploding on the reef at *Darter*'s stern.

Later on the same day *Rock* brought her stern to bear and fired three more torpedoes set to a depth of zero. All exploded either hitting the ship or the reef underneath. At 2000 hours, *Rock* sent her attack reports and resumed her normal patrol duties off Palawan Island.

The second attempt was made on the evening of October 31, by the USS *Nautilus* (SS-168). *Nautilus* used her 6-inch deck guns to score 55 hits out of 88 rounds fired. The Commanding Officer of *Nautilus,* Lieutenant-Commander E. Sharp reported: 'It is very doubtful that any equipment in *Darter*, at 1131 this date, would be of any value to Japan — except as scrap.'

THE INQUIRY

October 24, 1944 was a date that would become known as 'Black Tuesday' for the US Submarine Fleet. On that date, in addition to the loss of *Darter*, *Shark II* (SS-314) was lost with all hands in Luzon Strait, and *Tang* (SS-306) sank in Formosa Strait with a loss of 78 crew members when hit by her last torpedo that had made a circular run.

Captain McClintock wrote in his last *Darter* patrol report: 'No one regrets more than the Commanding Officer the loss of this, his first command. Yet he feels that every possible measure for safe navigation was carried out by the *Darter* during the 24 hours prior to the grounding, during which time she was in constant contact with the enemy. The whole patrol was spent west of Palawan, and in the Dangerous Ground, which areas are filled with shoals, the area was navigated with extreme caution; but when in contact with the enemy, the Commanding Officer did not see fit to slow down or delay the attack just because no sights had been obtained for 30 hours. The best estimate of position had to be used. In the opinion of the Commanding Officer, the risk of grounding, like the risk of depth charging, had to be accepted.'

A commander who had lost his ship could only be exonerated by a court. It was common knowledge that if the Navy did not hold a court-martial concerning *Darter*'s loss, Captain McClintock intended to request one. The Navy acted, and a court of inquiry was held in Fremantle.

The five-member board convened and began the questioning process, most of which concerned the navigational abilities of Lieutenant Commander Ernie Schwab and Schwab's navigating assistant, Quartermaster First Class Robert B. Gallic. The questions centered on knowledge of the ship's position at the time of the grounding, information available and the navigational practices followed just prior to the grounding.

Not being able to approach the submarine in their LCM, the demolition party obtained a rubber boat and balsa life-raft for transporting gear to the wreck. The equipment was placed in the boat and raft which were then pulled by personnel along the mile and a half of reef perimeter. (Commander D. H. McClintock)

The inquiry concluded that the loss of the *Darter* was one of the unfortunate losses that must be expected during wartime, and that Captain McClintock understood fully the dangers involved in the end-around maneuver during which his ship ran aground. The incident was, and is still considered, a classic example of calculated risk in pursuit of the enemy. Additionally, her loss was well balanced by the discovery of the Japanese task force, the loss of two cruisers and the damage done to the third. Neither McClintock nor any other *Darter* crew member was held at fault for the grounding.

Though running aground and becoming a war casualty herself while trying to sink *Takao, Darter*'s actions were not in vain. Nine months after *Darter*'s loss, *Takao* (while laid at anchor in Singapore Harbour undergoing repairs from *Darter*'s attack) was sent to the bottom by limpet mines on July 30, 1945. The mines were attached to the ship's hull by crew members from two British midget submarines, the *XE1* and *XE3*. Lieutenant I. E. Fraser and Leading Seaman J. J. Magennis, the men who laid the mines, were each awarded the Victoria Cross for their remarkable feat.

USS *Darter* earned four Battle Stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal for participating in the following operations: Truk Attack, February 16-17, 1944; Battle of Surigao Strait, October 24, 1944; Submarine War Patrol, March 22-May 23, 1944; and Submarine War Patrol, June 21-August 8, 1944.

USS *Dace* continued to make three more war patrols after the *Darter* rescue resulting in the sinking of one 1,000-ton supply ship, and one 1,391-ton cargo ship. While docked at Tanapag Harbour on August 15, 1945, she was notified of the end of hostilities.

After being exonerated by the court-martial, Commander McClintock arrived at Pearl Harbor and requested a new submarine with the *Darter*'s crew. Although his crew had been split up and placed on other boats, he was able to persuade the powers that be, and he was given a brand-new boat, the USS *Menhaden* (SS-377), then under construction in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and the majority of his original crew.

Menhaden's keel was laid on June 21, 1944, and she was launched down the ways five days before Christmas that same year. *Menhaden* and McClintock were in Panama enroute to the Pacific when word came that the war was over.

In the spring of 1945, a crew of US Navy personnel made up of demolition experts, along with movie director John Ford, boarded *Darter* with the mission of determining why the demolition charges placed by *Darter*'s crew had not gone off. (Although the reason for Ford's presence is unknown to the author, it is assumed he joined the mission out of curiosity and to film the stranded boat. A silent colour film exists, and although lasting only a few minutes, shows various features of the ship and the boarding crew inspecting items found.)

The torpedoes in the tubes could not be accessed by the demolition crew due to heavy corrosion on the doors and the difficulty in working from the outside in the heavy surf. Therefore, as shown here, a forced entry was made down through the deck forward of the torpedo room and 64lbs of composition C-3 explosive was placed on the platform deck in the outer hull and along the forward side of the torpedo room bulkhead. (Commander D. H. McClintock)

The mission experts concluded that the wire connecting each of the explosives had been wrapped around a number of interior metal fixtures as it was run from one end of the boat to the other. Subsequently, the heat from the fires used to destroy confidential materials had been so intense, that it blistered the paint in the area of the officers' head, and melted the insulation from the wire. Once the insulation was gone, the wires had shorted against the metal fixtures, prohibiting detonation of the explosives.

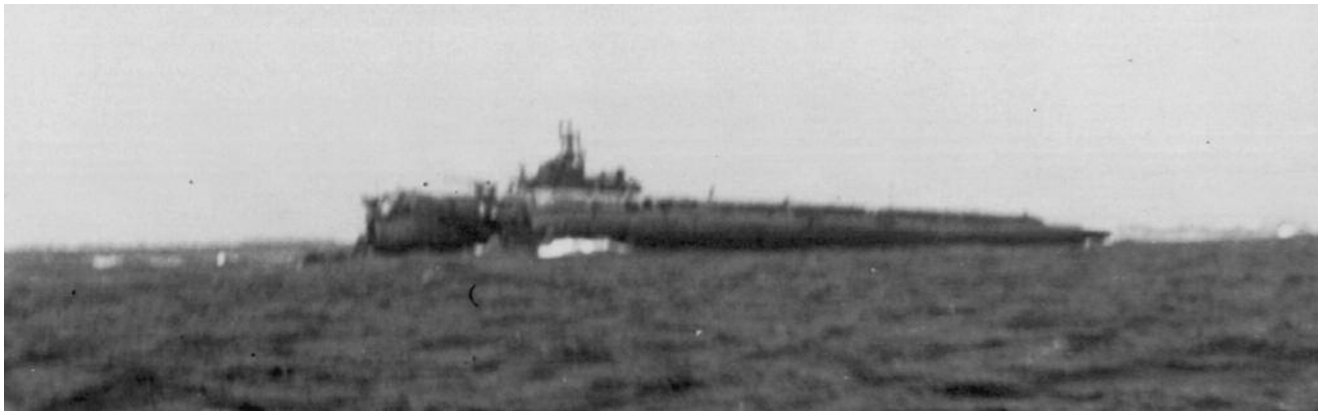
POST-WAR

On January 2, 1952, a party under the command of the Area Salvage Officer from the US Naval Forces Command assigned to the Thirteenth Air Force at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines was ordered to dispose of the seven torpedoes which were still aboard *Darter*, and to remove all matter of a classified nature and/or of intelligence value.

The light transport USS *Mark,* towing a medium landing craft (LCM) arrived at dawn on January 7. In heavy seas the LCM was loaded with gear and personnel. Upon reaching the *Darter* they found it impossible to take the LCM alongside due to the heavy surf. It was also impossible to take the LCM into the lagoon and approach from the leeward side because of the lack of water over the reef. The party returned to the *Mark* and obtained a rubber boat and balsa life-raft for transporting gear to the wreck. The gear was placed in the boat and raft which were then pulled by personnel along the mile and a half of reef perimeter. On their way, the party waded through water waist to shoulder deep and encountered many boulders and coral heads.

Upon reaching *Darter* at 1130, they entered through a huge hole under the conning tower. Though no one was aboard, the wreck bore indications of recent visits. A thorough search was made and torpedoes were found loaded in forward tubes 1, 3, 5, 2 and 6, with a sixth one on the port side of the forward torpedo room. No other explosives, intelligence, or classified matter was found.

The demolition and salvage officers were taken aboard the LCM which hove to about two miles from *Darter* to observe the explosion which occurred at 1530 hours on January 7, 1952. (Commander D. H. McClintock)



The explosion resulted in the entire bow forward of the after-bulkhead of the torpedo room being blown off. It is estimated that almost two tons of explosives were involved in the blast. (Commander D. H. McClintock)

The crew began placing demolition charges by packing 16 pounds of composition C-3 explosive around the warhead of the accessible torpedo. The torpedoes in the tubes could not be accessed due to heavy corrosion on the doors and the difficulty in working from the outside due to the heavy surf. Therefore, a forced entry was made down through the deck forward of the torpedo room. A total of four charges were laid and tied into a circular primacord set-up, which in turn was tied to a charge that had been placed on the loose torpedo warhead in the forward torpedo room. A lead was stretched aft to the conning tower where it was in turn attached to a detonator and 48 feet of miner's safety fuse. A total of 96 pounds of composition C-3, 150 feet of primacord safety fuse, and one non-electric detonator were used.

By this time, the LCM was laying off the wreck and the fuse was lit at 1450. The demolition and salvage officers were taken aboard the LCM which hove to about two miles from *Darter* to observe the explosion which occurred at 1530. The detonation blew off the entire bow forward of the torpedo room's after-bulkhead. It is estimated that almost two tons of explosives were involved in the blast.

Commander McClintock returned to the US in May 1946 and remained in the Navy holding various positions including duty on the staff of the National Security Council under President John F. Kennedy in Washington, DC. After retiring in 1965, he returned to his home town of Marquette, Michigan, and was employed at Northern Michigan University as Director of Capital Outlay and Campus Planning. He retired in 1976, and still lives in Marquette.

During the interview Commander McClintock related the following story. While on patrol, *Darter* officers held poker games in the wardroom, McClintock feeling it better that the officers were occupied with thoughts of losing their money at poker than their lives at war. Wins and losses were recorded, and once back on shore, debts were settled. After setting sail. aboard *Dace,* McClintock joined his officers to resume their gaming ritual, reflecting on the circumstances noting 'an ill wind blows nobody good' and lamenting the loss of the book that had tracked their poker progress. About then, Lieutenant E. P. Wilkinson (later the skipper of the first US nuclear sub *Nautilus*) revealed the one item he saved from the *Darter* — the poker book.

Captain McClintock considers that his most important work since his retirement has been his support of the Navy's submarine communication system, known as ELF (Extremely Low Frequency), the main part of which is located in Marquette County. The system and its transmissions allow communications to be made to US submarines at very deep depths throughout the world's oceans.

This comparison, taken on June 22, 1998, is from almost the same port-side perspective as the one taken in 1952. The sea and numerous scavengers have taken their toll over the past 54 years.

THE SECRET VILLAGE

By Tony Le Tissier

Deep in the woods of the Falkenhagener Heide, about ten miles north-west of Frankfurt-am-Oder, lie the rotting remains of an unnamed village surrounded by a double bank of barbed-wire fences with its two lonely security guards. From the air or from a map it could have been any other communal farm in the former German Democratic Republic. But this is where the secret headquarters of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG) were located for the conduct of nuclear or biological warfare in conjunction with their Warsaw Pact allies. Not, as one might have expected, in the underground facilities captured intact from the Wehrmacht at the end of the Second World War beneath the massive compound later developed by the Soviets at Zossen-Wünsdorf around their overt headquarters complex, nor anywhere near that place, but some 60 miles away in a 'Permanently Restricted Area' off-limits to the Western Allied Missions based in Potsdam.

The location was in many ways a sensible choice, for few outsiders could have known what was there when the decision was made in the 1970s to convert a massive German wartime underground factory into a command bunker proof against nuclear and biological warfare.

The factory had been built as the result of a decision made by the Wehrmacht's Heereswaffenamt (Army Ordnance Department) back in 1938 to go in for the manufacture of chlortrifloride for the recently discovered nerve gas Tabun. Chlortrifloride, or N-Stoff, as it was called, is an aggressive, highly inflammable substance that needs very special handling. The factory needed a shell five metres thick to prevent any intrusion from the water table in order to remain perfectly dry. It was envisaged that the whole production process as far as loading the finished product in steel containers on railway wagons would take place underground. However, it would take time to complete the construction of the bunker, for which it was stipulated that only German-born nationals could be employed, so some above-ground laboratories and plants were erected to enable the preliminary development of the manufacturing process from laboratory to factory-scale production. In fact the construction of the bunker was to take until 1943, a full five years to complete. One delaying factor was the difficulty of meeting the manpower requirements at the height of the war.

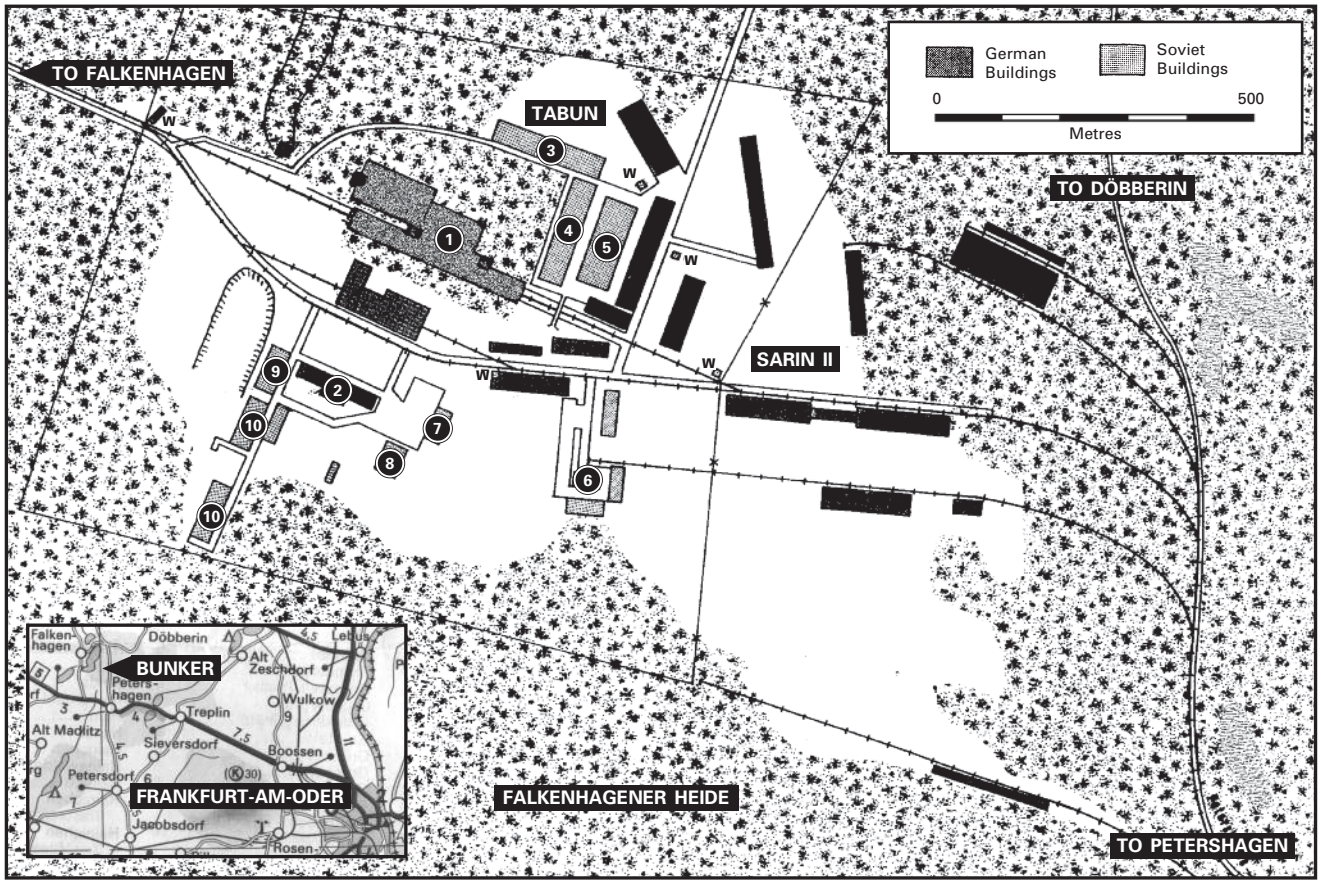
When Albert Speer became the Minister for Armaments and Munitions in 1943, he decided to implement the production of Sarin II, a later generation of nerve gas, at the same site. The two products and those concerned with them were kept completely separate. A small satellite camp of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp was set up that year in the woods north of the site, but whether the inmates were employed in the construction of the Sarin II installations, or used in the assembly of V-weapons in part of the underground factory remains uncertain.

Considerable effort was given by the Germans to camouflaging the site from aerial observation. Transportation was by a special narrow-gauge track connecting with the main lines at Briesen. These tracks followed the contour of a new concrete road through the forest built to detour local traffic away from the site and were countersunk in the road surface to conceal their profile. Production also required a heavy consumption of electrical power, and immediate post-war maps show a line of overhead pylons stopping abruptly a considerable distance from the site. This clue to something unusual in the vicinity that would merit such a supply was later removed. During the war, the Germans continued to rely on camouflage for the protection of the site and no anti-aircraft guns were deployed that might have attracted attention to it.

The upper level of the five-storied factory was concealed under a natural hill in such a way that a railway line ran right through it in a tunnel. Three ventilation towers projected above the hill below the height of the tops of the trees that covered it.

During the brief period the factory was operational between October 1944 and Feb-

Top: **The outer guardroom on the narrow concrete road leading to the formerly top secret headquarters for Soviet forces in Germany, established in the Wehrmacht's nerve-gas factory north of Frankfurt-am-Oder.** *Left:* **The eastern entrance with the old German laboratories on either side of the railway line leading to the underground HQ.** *Right:* **Massive entrance doors were installed by the Soviets inside the tunnel to seal off the bunker from nuclear attack.**



The Secret Village. The original German underground bunker is [1] and the original accomodation block [2]. Soviet additions to the site are: [3] hotel; [4] accommodation block; [5] dining hall; [6] fire station; [7] Officers' Club; [8] Cultural Centre; [9] school and married accommodation, and [10] new married quarters.

ruary 1945, about 22 to 30 tons of chlortrifloride were finally produced. By this time the site was under SS control and it seems that V-weapons were also assembled here. When the Red Army established bridgeheads across the Oder river at the beginning of February 1945, production was hastily abandoned and the satellite concentration camp disbanded. By early April, Grenadier-Ersatz- und Ausbildungs-Regiment 209 had established its command post in the bunker as part of the deployment of the 156. Ersatz- und Ausbildungs-Division, a static reserve formation forming part of the German 9. Armee facing the 1st Byelorussian Front. A new member of this regiment, passing through to complete his training in the front line, saw the abandoned V-weapon workshops in the underground factory, where he stayed the night.

Clearly the factory and site would have been stripped by the Soviets of everything removable in 1945 as part of their reparations scheme. Having no further interest in the complex at that time, the Soviets handed it back to the local authorities and it was not until the 1950s that the Soviet Army returned to establish a unit there that had regular contact with the local residents. In this connection, it is believed that the principal communications facility for GSFG at Zossen-Wünsdorf was moved here following the Anglo-American spy tunnel intercept from the south-east corner of the American Sector of Berlin being discovered in April 1956 (see *Berlin Then and Now,* pages 372-373).

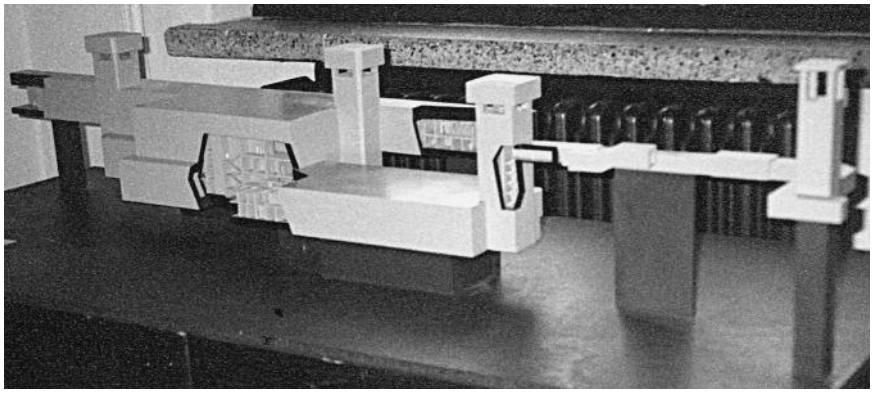
Then in the 1970s work was begun on converting the factory into the GSFG command bunker. One of the ventilation towers was filled with filters for use in case of a biological attack, when the other two could be cut off. The railway tunnel was blocked off at either end and airproof personnel entrances installed incorporating a series of three massive steel doors about a metre wide, two metres high and half a metre thick. Between these doors were built decontamination facilities overlooked by control cubicles, with a hospital installed close behind.

Down below, the various production chambers were converted into the control bunker role with raised floors under the communications rooms allowing easy access for the technicians, a special wall-papered, self-contained suite for the C-in-C, and other facilities for the senior officers. The soldiers appear to have been allocated collapsible bunks hinged to the corridor walls denoted by painted numbers. The main operations room has a false ceiling reducing its original height.

From interpreters that took part, it is known that Warsaw Pact exercises were conducted here, and from 1988 onwards helicopters were heard landing at the site.

The Soviets left the original production structures alone, apart from two halls that they used for basketball and the original accommodation building. But they did build officers' quarters, a large accommodation block and a hotel with a separate, communal mess hall, all within the outline of the original structures. They also built a cultural centre, an officer's club, family accommodation and a school, and even some new family accommodation blocks immediately before their departure in 1992. Had it not been for the Four plus Two Agreement, it seems that the army of the new Russian Federation had been prepared to stay and maintain its capacity for a nuclear or biological strike.

To what extent the Anglo-American intelligence complex on the Teufelsberg in Berlin were able to analyse the role of this location has not been disclosed, but it would be interesting to know!



This model shows the extent of the underground factory-cum-nuclear headquarters. A local resident and physicist, Dr Heini Hofmann, has made a thorough study of the site and currently conducts tours of it from the Museum at Seelow that commemorates the 1945 battle for the Seelow Heights.